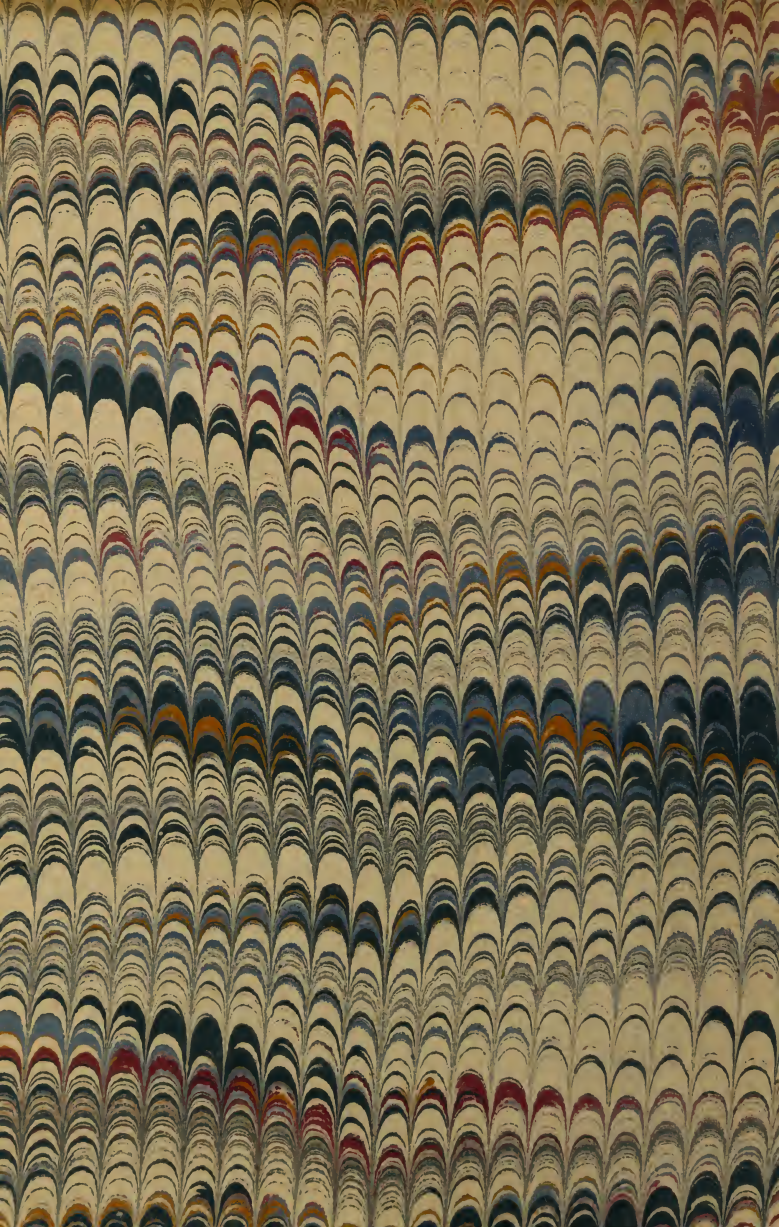

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THE

WORKS

OF

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS

LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY

THE REV. EDWARD MANGIN, M. A.

IN NINETEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. XI.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM MILLER, ALBEMARLE STREET;
AND JAMES CARPENTER, OLD BOND STREET.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM MILLER, ALBEMARLE STREET;
AND JAMES CARPENTER, OLD BOND STREET.

1811.

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THE

HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER I.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MRS. NORTON.

MY DEAR MRS. NORTON, Monday Night, July 24.

HAD I not fallen into fresh troubles, which disabled me for several days from holding a pen, I should not have forborne inquiring after your health, and that of your son; for I should have been but too ready to impute your silence to the cause to which, to my very great concern, I find it was owing. I pray to Heaven, my dear good friend, to give you comfort in the way most desirable to yourself.

I am exceedingly concerned at Miss Howe's writing about me to my friends. I do assure you, that I was as ignorant of her intention so to do as of the contents of her letter. Nor has she yet let me know (discouraged, I suppose, by her ill success) that she *did* write. It is impossible to share the delight which such charming spirits give,

without the inconvenience that will attend their volatility. —So mixed are our best enjoyments!

It was but yesterday that I wrote to chide the dear creature for freedoms of that nature, which her unseasonably-expressed love for me had made her take, as you wrote me word in your former. I was afraid that all such freedoms would be attributed to *me*. And I am sure that nothing but my own application to my friends, and a full conviction of my contrition, will procure me favour. Least of all can I expect that either your mediation or her's (both of whose fond and partial love of me is so well known) will avail me.

[She then gives a brief account of the arrest: of her dejection under it: of her apprehensions of being carried to her former lodgings: of Mr. Lovelace's avowed innocence as to that insult: of her release by Mr. Belford: of Mr. Lovelace's promise not to molest her: of her clothes being sent her: of the earnest desire of all his friends, and of himself, to marry her: of Miss Howe's advice to comply with their requests: and of her declared resolution rather to die than be his, sent to Miss Howe, to be given to his relations, but as the day before. After which she thus proceeds:]

Now, my dear Mrs. Norton, you will be surprised, perhaps, that I should have returned such an answer: but when you have every thing before you, you, who know me so well, will not think me wrong. And, besides, I am upon a *better preparation* than for an earthly husband.

Nor let it be imagined, my dear and ever venerable friend, that my present turn of mind proceeds from gloominess or melancholy; for although it was *brought on* by

disappointment, (the world showing me early, even at my first *rushing* into it, its true and ugly face,) yet I hope that it has obtained a better root, and will every day more and more, by its fruits, demonstrate to me, and to all my friends, that it has.

I have written to my sister. Last Friday I wrote. So the die is thrown. I hope for a gentle answer. But, perhaps, they will not vouchsafe me *any*. It is my *first* direct application, you know. I wish Miss Howe had left me to my own workings in this tender point.

It will be a great satisfaction to me to hear of your perfect recovery; and that my foster-brother is out of danger. But why, said I, *out of danger?*—When can *this* be justly said of creatures, who hold by so uncertain a tenure? This is one of those forms of common speech, that proves the *frailty* and the *presumption* of poor mortals at the same time.

Don't be uneasy, you cannot answer your wishes to be with me. I am happier than I could have expected to be among mere strangers. It was grievous at first; but use reconciles every thing to us. The people of the house where I am are courteous and honest. There is a widow who lodges in it [have I not said so formerly?] a good woman; who is the better for having been a proficient in the school of affliction.

An excellent school! my dear Mrs. Norton, in which we are taught to know ourselves, to be able to compassionate and bear with one another, and to look up to a better hope.

I have as humane a physician, (whose fees are his least regard,) and as worthy an apothecary, as ever patient was visited by. My nurse is diligent, obliging, silent, and sober. So I am not unhappy *without:* and *within*—I

hope, my dear Mrs. Norton, that I shall be every day more and more happy *within*.

No doubt it would be one of the greatest comforts I could know to have you with me: you, who love me so dearly: who have been the watchful sustainer of my helpless infancy: you, by whose precepts I have been so much benefitted!—In your dear bosom could I repose all my griefs: and by your piety and experience in the ways of Heaven, should I be strengthened in what I am still to go through.

But, as it must not be, I will acquiesce; and so, I hope, will you: for you see in what respects I am *not* unhappy; and in those that I *am*, they lie not in your power to remedy.

Then as I have told you, I have all my clothes in my own possession. So I am rich enough, as to this world, in common conveniencies.

You see, my venerable and dear friend, that I am not always turning the dark side of my prospects, in order to move compassion; a trick imputed to me, too often, by my hard-hearted sister; when, if I know my own heart, it is above all trick or artifice. Yet I hope at last I shall be so happy as to receive *benefit* rather than *reproach* from this talent, if it *be* my talent. At *last*, I say; for whose heart have I *hitherto* moved?—Not one, I am sure, that was not *predetermined* in my favour.

As to the day—I have passed it, as I ought to pass it. It has been a very heavy day to me!—More for my friends sake, too, than for my own!—How did *they* use to pass it!—What a festivity!—How have they now passed it?—To *imagine* it, how grievous!—Say not that those are cruel, who suffer so much for my fault; and who, for eighteen years together, rejoiced in me, and rejoiced me

by their indulgent goodness!—But I will think the rest! —Adieu, my dearest Mrs. Norton!—

Adieu!

LETTER II.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS ARABELLA HARLOWE.

Friday, July 21.

If, my dearest Sister, I did not think the state of my health very precarious, and that it was my duty to take this step, I should hardly have dared to approach you, although but with my pen, after having found your censures so dreadfully justified as they have been.

I have not the courage to write to my father himself, nor yet to my mother. And it is with trembling that I address myself to you, to beg of you to intercede for me, that my father will have the goodness to revoke that heaviest part of the very heavy curse he laid upon me, which relates to HEREAFTER; for, as to the HERE, *I have* indeed *met with my punishment from the very wretch in whom I was supposed to place my confidence.*

As I hope not for restoration to favour, I may be allowed to be very earnest on this head: yet will I not use any arguments in support of my request, because I am sure my father, were it in his power, would not have his poor child miserable for ever.

I have the most grateful sense of my mother's goodness in sending me up my clothes. I would have acknowledged the favour the moment I received them, with the most

thankful duty, but that I feared any line from me would be unacceptable.

I would not give fresh offence: so will decline all other commendations of duty and love: appealing to my heart for both, where *both* are flaming with an ardour that nothing but death can extinguish: therefore only subscribe myself, without so much as a name,

My dear and happy Sister,
Your afflicted servant.

A letter directed for me, at Mr. Smith's, a glover, in King-street, Covent-garden, will come to hand.

LETTER III.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

[*In answer to Letters* LXXIX. LXXXII. *Vol.* VI.]

Edgware, Monday, July 24.

WHAT pains thou takest to persuade thyself, that the lady's ill health is owing to the vile arrest, and to the implacableness of her friends. Both primarily (if they were) to be laid at thy door. What poor excuses will good heads make for the evils they are put upon by bad hearts! —But 'tis no wonder that he who can sit down premeditately to do a bad action, will content himself with a bad excuse: and yet what fools must he suppose the rest of the world to be, if he imagines them as easy to be imposed upon as he can impose upon himself?

In vain dost thou impute to pride or wilfulness the ne-

cessity to which thou hast reduced this lady of parting with her clothes; For can she do otherwise, and be the noble-minded creature she is?

Her implacable friends have refused her the current cash she left behind her; and wished, as her sister wrote to her, to see her reduced to want: probably therefore they will not be sorry that she is reduced to such straights; and will take it for a justification from Heaven of their wicked hard heartedness. Thou canst not suppose she would take supplies from thee: to take them from me would, in her opinion, be taking them from thee. Miss Howe's mother is an avaricious woman; and, perhaps, the daughter can do nothing of that sort unknown to her; and, if she *could*, is too noble a girl to deny it, if charged. And then Miss Harlowe is firmly of opinion, that she shall never want nor wear the thing she disposes of.

Having heard nothing from town that obliges me to go thither, I shall gratify poor Belton with my company till to-morrow, or perhaps till Wednesday. For the unhappy man is more and more loth to part with me. I shall soon set out for Epsom, to endeavour to serve him there, and re-instate him in his own house. Poor fellow! he is most horribly low spirited; mopes about; and nothing diverts him. I pity him at my heart; but can do him no good.—What consolation can I give him, either from his past life, or from his future prospects?

Our friendships and intimacies, Lovelace, are only calculated for strong life and health. When sickness comes, we look round us, and upon one another, like frighted birds, at the sight of a kite ready to souse upon them. Then, with all our bravery, what miserable wretches are we!

Thou tellest me that thou seest reformation is coming swiftly upon me. I hope it is. I see so much difference

in the behaviour of this admirable woman in *her* illness, and that of poor Belton in *his*, that it is plain to me the sinner is the real coward, and the saint the true hero ; and, sooner or later, we shall all find it to be so, if we are not cut off suddenly.

The lady shut herself up at six o'clock yesterday afternoon ; and intends not to see company till seven or eight this ; not even her nurse—imposing upon herself a severe fast. And why ? *It is her* BIRTH-DAY !—Blooming—yet declining in her very blossom !—Every birth-day till this, no doubt, happy !—What must be her reflections !—What ought to be thine !

What sport dost thou make with my aspirations, and my prostrations, as thou callest them ; and with my dropping of the bank note behind her chair ! I had too much awe of her at the time, and too much apprehended her displeasure at the offer, to make it with the grace that would better have become my intention. But the action, if awkward, was modest. Indeed, the fitter subject for ridicule with thee ; who canst no more taste the beauty and delicacy of modest obligingness than of modest love. For the same may be said of inviolable respect, that the poet says of unfeigned affection,

> I *speak !* I know not what !—
> Speak ever so : and if I *answer* you
> I know not what, it shows the more of love.
> Love is a child that talks in broken language ;
> Yet then it speaks most plain.

The like may be pleaded in behalf of that modest respect which made the humble offerer afraid to invade the awful eye, or the revered hand ; but awkwardly to drop its incense beside the altar it should have been laid upon. But

how should that soul, which could treat delicacy itself brutally, know any thing of this!

But I am still more amazed at thy courage, to think of throwing thyself in the way of Miss Howe, and Miss Arabella Harlowe!—Thou wilt not dare, surely, to carry this thought into execution!

As to *my* dress, and *thy* dress, I have only to say, that the sum total of thy observation is this: that *my* outside is the *worst* of me; and *thine* the *best* of thee: and what gettest thou by the comparison? Do thou reform the one, and I'll try to mend the other. I challenge thee to begin.

Mrs. Lovick gave me, at my request, the copy of a meditation she showed me, which was extracted by the lady from the scriptures, while under arrest at Rowland's, as appears by the date. The lady is not to know that I have taken a copy.

You and I always admired the noble simplicity, and natural ease and dignity of style, which are the distinguishing characteristics of these books, whenever any passages from them, by way of quotation in the works of other authors, popt upon us. And once I remember you, even *you*, observed, that those passages always appeared to you like a rich vein of golden ore, which runs through baser metals; embellishing the work they were brought to authenticate.

Try, Lovelace, if thou canst relish a Divine beauty. I think it must strike transient (if not permanent) remorse into thy heart. Thou boastest of thy ingenuousness: let this be the test of it; and whether thou canst be serious on a subject so deep, the occasion of it resulting from thyself.

MEDITATION.

Saturday, July 15.

O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together!

For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up!

For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit. The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise? When will the night be gone? And I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope—mine eye shall no more see good.

Wherefore is light given to her *that* is *in misery; and life unto the bitter in soul?*

Who longeth for death; but it cometh not; and diggeth for it more than for hid treasures?

Why is light given to one *whose way is hid; and whom God hath hedged in?*

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me!

I was not in safety; neither had I rest; neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

But behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any.

He giveth right to the poor—and if they be found in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their works and their trangressions.

I have a little leisure, and am in a scribbling vein: indulge me, Lovelace, a few reflections on these sacred books.

We are taught to read the Bible, when children, and as

a rudiment only; and, as far as I know, this may be the reason why we think ourselves above it when at a maturer age. For you know that our parents, as well as we, *wisely* rate our proficiency by the books we are advanced to, and not by our understanding of those we have passed through. But, in my uncle's illness, I had the curiosity, in some of my dull hours, (lighting upon one in his closet,) to dip into it: and then I found, wherever I turned, that there were *admirable things in it.* I have borrowed one, on receiving from Mrs. Lovick the above meditation; for I had a mind to compare the passages contained in it by the book, hardly believing they could be so exceedingly apposite as I find they are. And one time or other, it is very likely, that I shall make a resolution to give the whole Bible a perusal, by way of *course*, as I may say.

This, meantime, I will venture to repeat, is certain, that the style is that truly easy, simple, and natural one, which we should admire in other authors excessively. Then all the world join in an opinion of the antiquity, and authenticity too, of the book; and the learned are fond of strengthening their different arguments by its sanctions. Indeed, I was so much taken with it at my uncle's, that I was half ashamed that it appeared so *new* to me. And yet, I cannot but say, that I have some of the Old Testament history, as it is called, in my head: but, perhaps, am more obliged for it to Josephus than to the Bible itself.

Odd enough, with all our pride of learning, that we choose to derive the little we know from the under currents, perhaps muddy ones too, when the clear, the pellucid fountain-head, is much nearer at hand, and easier to be come at—slighted the more, possibly, for that very reason!

But man is a pragmatical, foolish creature; and the more we look into him, the more we must despise him.—Lords of the creation!—Who can forbear indignant laughter! When we see not one of the individuals of that creation (his perpetually-eccentric self excepted) but acts within its own natural and original appointment: and all the time, proud and vain as the conceited wretch is of fancied and self-dependent excellence, he is obliged not only for the ornaments, but for the necessaries of life, (that is to say, for food as well as raiment,) to all the other creatures; strutting with their blood and spirits in his veins, and with their plumage on his back: for what has he of his own, but a very mischievous, monkey-like, bad nature! Yet thinks himself at liberty to kick, and cuff, and elbow out every worthier creature: and when he has none of the animal creation to hunt down and abuse, will make use of his power, his strength, or his wealth, to oppress the less powerful and weaker of his own species!

When you and I meet next, let us enter more largely into this subject: and, I dare say, we shall take it by turns, in imitation of the two sages of antiquity, to laugh and to weep at the thoughts of what miserable, yet conceited beings, men in general, but we libertines in particular, are.

I fell upon a piece at Dorrell's, this very evening, intituled, *The Sacred Classics*, written by one Blackwell.

I took it home with me, and had not read a dozen pages, when I was convinced that I ought to be ashamed of myself to think how greatly I have admired less noble and less natural beauties in Pagan authors; while I have known nothing of this all-excelling collection of beauties, the Bible! By my faith, Lovelace, I shall for the future have a better opinion of the good sense and taste of half a score of parsons, whom I have fallen in with in my time, and

despised for *magnifying*, as I thought they did, the language and the sentiments to be found in it, in preference to all the ancient poets and philosophers. And this is now a convincing proof to me, and shames as much an infidel's presumption as his ignorance, that those who know least are the greatest scoffers. A pretty pack of would-be wits of us, who censure without knowledge, laugh without reason, and are most noisy and loud against things we know least of!

LETTER IV.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday, July 26.

I CAME not to town till this morning early: poor Belton clinging to me, as a man destitute of all other hold.

I hastened to Smith's, and had but a very indifferent account of the lady's health. I sent up my compliments; and she desired to see me in the afternoon.

Mrs. Lovick told me, that after I went away on Saturday, she actually parted with one of her best suits of clothes to a gentlewoman who is her [Mrs. Lovick's] benefactress, and who bought them for a niece who is very speedily to be married, and whom she fits out and portions as her intended heiress. The lady was so jealous that the money might come from you or me, that she would see the purchaser: who owned to Mrs. Lovick that she bought them for half their worth: but yet, though her conscience permitted her to take them at such an under rate, the widow says her friend admired the lady, as one of the

loveliest of her sex: and having been let into a little of her story, could not help shedding tears at taking away her purchase.

She may be a good sort of a woman: Mrs. Lovick says she *is*: but SELF is an odious devil, that reconciles to some people the most cruel and dishonest actions. But, nevertheless, it is my opinion, that those who can suffer themselves to take advantage of the necessities of their fellow-creatures, in order to buy any thing at a less rate than would allow them the legal interest of their purchase-money (supposing they purchase *before they want*) are no better than robbers for the difference.—To plunder a wreck, and to rob at a fire, are indeed higher degrees of wickedness: but do not those, as well as these, heighten the distresses of the distressed, and heap misery on the miserable, whom it is the duty of every one to relieve?

About three o'clock I went again to Smith's. The lady was writing when I sent up my name; but admitted of my visit. I saw a miserable alteration in her countenance for the worse; and Mrs. Lovick respectfully accusing her of too great assiduity to her pen, early and late, and of her abstinence the day before, I took notice of the alteration; and told her, that her physician had greater hopes of her than she had of herself; and I would take the liberty to say, that despair of recovery allowed not room for cure.

She said she neither despaired nor hoped. Then stepping to the glass, with great composure, My countenance, said she, is indeed an honest picture of my heart. But the mind will run away with the body at any time.

Writing is all my diversion, continued she: and I have subjects that cannot be dispensed with. As to my hours, I have always been an early riser: but now rest is less in my power than ever. Sleep has a long time ago quarreled

with me, and will not be friends, although I have made the first advances. What *will* be, *must*.

She then stept to her closet, and brought me a parcel sealed up with three seals: Be so kind, said she, as to give this to your friend. A very grateful present it ought to be to him: for, Sir, this packet contains such letters of his to me, as, compared with his actions, would reflect dishonour upon all his sex, were they to fall into other hands.

As to my letters to him, they are not many. He may either keep or destroy them, as he pleases.

I thought, Lovelace, I ought not to forego this opportunity to plead for you: I therefore, with the packet in my hand, urged all the arguments I could think of in your favour.

She heard me out with more attention than I could have promised myself, considering her determined resolution.

I would not interrupt you, Mr. Belford, said she, though I am far from being pleased with the subject of your discourse. The motives for your pleas in his favour are generous. I love to see instances of generous friendship in either sex. But I have written my full mind on this subject to Miss Howe, who will communicate it to the ladies of his family. No more, therefore, I pray you, upon a topic that may lead to disagreable recriminations.

Her apothecary came in. He advised her to the air, and blamed her for so great an application, as he was told she made to her pen; and he gave it as the doctor's opinion, as well as his own, that she would recover, if she herself desired to recover, and would use the means.

She may possibly write too much for her health: but I have observed, on several occasions, that when the medical men are at a loss what to prescribe, they inquire what

their patients best like, or are most diverted with, and forbid them that.

But, noble minded as they see this lady is, they know not half her nobleness of mind, nor how deeply she is wounded; and depend too much upon her *youth*, which I doubt will not do in this case; and upon *time*, which will not alleviate the woes of such a mind: for, having been bent upon doing good, and upon reclaiming a libertine whom she loved, she is disappointed in all her darling views, and will never be able, I fear, to look up with satisfaction enough in herself to make life desirable to her. For this lady had *other* views in living, than the common ones of eating, sleeping, dressing, visiting, and those other fashionable amusements, which fill up the time of most of her sex, especially of those of it who think themselves fitted to shine in and adorn polite assemblies. Her grief, in short, seems to me to be of such a nature, that *time*, which alleviates most other persons' afflictions, will, as the poet says, *give increase to her's.*

Thou, Lovelace, mightest have seen all this superior excellence, as thou wentest along. In every word, in every sentiment, in every action, is it visible.—But thy cursed inventions and intriguing spirit ran away with thee. 'Tis fit that the subject of thy wicked boast, and thy reflections on talents so egregiously misapplied, should be *thy* punishment and thy curse.

Mr. Goddard took his leave; and I was going to do so too, when the maid came up, and told her a gentleman was below, who very earnestly inquired after her health, and desired to see her: his name Hickman.

She was overjoyed; and bid the maid desire the gentleman to walk up.

I would have withdrawn; but I supposed she thought it

was likely I should have met him upon the stairs; and so she forbid it.

She shot to the stairs-head to receive him, and, taking his hand, asked half a dozen questions (without waiting for any answer) in relation to Miss Howe's health; acknowledging, in high terms, her goodness in sending him to see her, before she set out upon her little journey.

He gave her a letter from that young lady, which she put into her bosom, saying, she would read it by-and-by.

He was visibly shocked to see how ill she looked.

You look at me with concern, Mr. Hickman, said she—O Sir! times are strangely altered with me since I saw you last at my dear Miss Howe's!—What a cheerful creature was I then!—my heart at rest! my prospects charming! and beloved by every body!—but I will not pain you!

Indeed, Madam, said he, I am grieved for you at my soul.

He turned away his face, with visible grief in it.

Her own eyes glistened: but she turned to each of us, presenting one to the other—him to me, as a gentleman *truly* deserving to be *called so*—me to him, as *your* friend, indeed, [how was I at that instant ashamed of myself!] but, nevertheless, as a man of humanity; detesting my friend's baseness; and desirous of doing her all manner of good offices.

Mr. Hickman received my civilities with a coldness, which, however, was rather to be expected on your account, than that it deserved exception on mine. And the lady invited us both to breakfast with her in the morning; he being obliged to return the next day.

I left them together, and called upon Mr. Dorrell, my attorney, to consult him upon poor Belton's affairs; and

then went home, and wrote thus far, preparative to what may occur in my breakfasting-visit in the morning.

LETTER V.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday, July 27.

I WENT this morning, according to the lady's invitation, to breakfast, and found Mr. Hickman with her.

A good deal of heaviness and concern hung upon his countenance: but he received me with more respect than he did yesterday; which, I presume, was owing to the lady's favourable character of me.

He spoke very little; for I suppose they had all their talk out yesterday, and before I came this morning.

By the hints that dropped, I perceived that Miss Howe's letter gave an account of your interview with her at Col. Ambrose's—of your professions to Miss Howe; and Miss Howe's opinion, that marrying you was the only way now left to repair her wrongs.

Mr. Hickman, as I also gathered, had pressed her, in Miss Howe's name, to let her, on her return from the Isle of Wight, find her at a neighbouring farm-house, where neat apartments would be made ready to receive her. She asked how long it would be before they returned? And he told her, it was proposed to be no more than a fortnight out and in. Upon which she said, she should then perhaps have time to consider of that kind proposal.

He had tendered her money from Miss Howe; but could not induce her to take any. No wonder I was re-

fused! she only said, that, if she had occasion, she would be obliged to nobody but Miss Howe.

Mr. Goddard, her apothecary, came in before breakfast was over. At her desire he sat down with us. Mr. Hickman asked him, if he could give him any consolation in relation to Miss Harlowe's recovery, to carry down to a friend who loved her as she loved her own life?

The lady, said he, will do very well, if she will resolve upon it herself. Indeed you *will*, Madam. The doctor is entirely of this opinion; and has ordered nothing for you but weak jellies and innocent cordials, lest you should starve yourself. And let me tell you, Madam, that so much watching, so little nourishment, and so much grief, as you seem to indulge, is enough to impair the most vigorous health, and to wear out the strongest constitution.

What, Sir, said she, can I do? I have no appetite. Nothing you call nourishing will stay on my stomach. I do what I can: and have such kind directors in Dr. H. and you, that I should be inexcusable if I did not.

I'll give you a regimen, Madam, replied he; which, I am sure, the doctor will approve of, and will make physic unnecessary in your case. And that is, 'go to rest at 'ten at night. Rise not till seven in the morning. Let 'your breakfast be watergruel, or milk-pottage, or weak 'broths: your dinner any thing you like, so you will *but* 'eat: a dish of tea, with milk, in the afternoon; and sago 'for your supper: and, my life for your's, this diet, and 'a month's country air, will set you up.'

We were much pleased with the worthy gentleman's disinterested regimen: and she said, referring to her nurse, (who vouched for her,) Pray, Mr. Hickman, let Miss Howe know the good hands I am in: and as to the

kind charge of the gentleman, assure her, that all I promised to her, in the longest of my two last letters, on the subject of my health, I do and will, to the utmost of my power, observe. I have engaged, Sir, (to Mr. Goddard,) I have engage, Sir, (to me,) to Miss Howe, to avoid all wilful neglects. It would be an unpardonable fault, and very ill become the character I would be glad to deserve, or the temper of mind I wish my friends hereafter to think me mistress of, if I did not.

Mr. Hickman and I went afterwards to a neighbouring coffee-house; and he gave me some account of your behaviour at the ball on Monday night, and of your treatment of him in the conference he had with you before that; which he represented in a more favourable light than you had done yourself: and yet he gave his sentiments of you with great freedom, but with the politeness of a gentleman.

He told me how very determined the lady was against marrying you; that she had, early this morning, set herself to write a letter to Miss Howe, in answer to one he brought her, which he was to call for at twelve, it being almost finished before he saw her at breakfast; and that at three he proposed to set out on his return.

He told me that Miss Howe, and her mother, and himself, were to begin their little journey for the Isle of Wight on Monday next: but that he must make the most favourable representation of Miss Harlowe's bad health, or they should have a very uneasy absence. He expressed the pleasure he had in finding the lady in such good hands. He proposed to call on Dr. H. to take his opinion whether it were likely she would recover; and hoped he should find it favourable.

As he was resolved to make the best of the matter, and

as the lady had refused to accept of money offered by Mr. Hickman, I said nothing of her parting with her clothes. I thought it would serve no other end to mention it, but to shock Miss Howe: for it has such a sound with it, that a woman of her rank and fortune should be so reduced, that I cannot myself think of it with patience; nor know I but one man in the world who can.

This gentleman is a little finical and formal. Modest or diffident men wear not soon off those little precisenesses, which the confident, if ever they had them, presently get above; because they are too confident to doubt any thing. But I think Mr. Hickman is an agreeable, sensible man, and not at all deserving of the treatment or the character you give him.

But you are really a strange mortal: because you have advantages in your person, in your air, and intellect, above all the men I know, and a face that would deceive the devil, you can't think any man else tolerable.

It is upon this modest principle that thou deridest some of us, who, not having thy confidence in their outside appearance, seek to hide their defects by the tailor's and peruke-maker's assistance; (mistakenly enough, if it be really done so absurdly as to expose them more;) and sayest, that we do but hang out a sign, in our dress, of what we have in the shop of our minds. This, no doubt, thou thinkest, is smartly observed: but pr'ythee, Lovelace, tell me, if thou canst, what sort of a sign must thou hang out, wert thou obliged to give us a clear idea by it of the furniture of *thy* mind?

Mr. Hickman tells me, he should have been happy with Miss Howe some weeks ago, (for all the settlements have been some time engrossed;) but that she will not marry, she declares, while her dear friend is so unhappy.

This is truly a charming instance of the force of *female friendship;* which you and I, and our brother rakes, have constantly ridiculed as a chimerical thing in women of equal age, rank, and perfections.

But really, Lovelace, I see more and more that there are not in the world, with all our conceited pride, narrower-souled wretches than we rakes and libertines are. And I'll tell thee how it comes about.

Our early love of roguery makes us generally run away from instruction; and so we become mere smatterers in the sciences we are put to learn; and, because we *will* know no more, think there is no more to *be* known.

With an infinite deal of vanity, un-reined imaginations, and no judgments at all, we next commence *half-wits*, and then think we have the whole field of knowledge in possession, and despise every one who takes more pains, and is more serious, than ourselves, as phlegmatic, stupid fellows, who have no taste for the most poignant pleasures of life.

This makes us insufferable to men of modesty and merit, and obliges us to herd with those of our own cast; and by this means we have no *opportunities* of seeing or conversing with any body who could or would show us what we are; and so we conclude that we are the cleverest fellows in the world, and the only men of spirit in it; and looking down with supercilious eyes on all who gave not themselves the liberties we take, imagine the world made for us, and for us only.

Thus, as to useful knowledge, while others go to the bottom, we only skim the surface; are despised by people of solid sense, of true honour, and superior talents; and shutting our eyes, move round and round (like so many

blind mill-horses) in one narrow circle, while we imagine we have all the world to range in.

I THREW myself in Mr. Hickman's way, on his return from the lady.

He was excessively moved at taking leave of her; being afraid, as he said to me, (though he would not tell her so,) that he should never see her again. She charged him to represent every thing to Miss Howe in the most favourable light that the truth would bear.

He told me of a tender passage at parting; which was, that having saluted her at her closet-door, he could not help once more taking the same liberty, in a more fervent manner, at the stairs-head, whither she accompanied him; and this in the thought, that it was the last time he should ever have that honour; and offering to apologize for his freedom (for he had pressed her to his heart with a vehemence, that he could neither account for or resist)—'Excuse you, Mr. Hickman! that I will: you are my brother 'and my friend: and to show you that the good man, who 'is to be happy with my beloved Miss Howe, is very dear 'to me, you shall carry to her this token of my love,' [offering her sweet face to his salute, and pressing his hand between her's:] 'and perhaps her love of *me* will make it 'more agreeable to her, than her punctilio would otherwise 'allow it to be: and tell her, said she, dropping on one 'knee, with clasped hands, aud uplifted eyes, that in this 'posture you see me, in the last moment of our parting, 'begging a blessing upon you both, and that you may be 'the delight and comfort of each other, for many, very 'many happy years!'

Tears, said he, fell from my eyes: I even sobbed with mingled joy and sorrow; and she retreating as soon

as I raised her, I went down stairs highly dissatisfied with myself for going; yet unable to stay; my eyes fixed the contrary way to my feet, as long as I could behold the skirts of her raiment.

I went into the back-shop, continued the worthy man, and recommended the angelic lady to the best care of Mrs. Smith; and, when I was in the street, cast my eye up at her window: there, for the last time, I doubt, said he, that I shall ever behold her, I saw her; and she waved her charming hand to me, and with such a look of smiling goodness, and mingled concern, as I cannot describe.

Pr'ythee tell me, thou vile Lovelace, if thou hast not a notion, even from these jejune descriptions of mine, that there must be a more exalted pleasure in intellectual friendship, than ever thou couldst taste in the gross fumes of sensuality? And whether it may not be possible for thee, in time, to give that preference to the *infinitely* preferable, which I hope, now, that I shall always give?

I will leave thee to make the most of this reflection, from

Thy true friend,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER VI.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, July 25.

Your two affecting letters were brought to me (as I had directed any letter from you should be) to the Colonel's,

about an hour before we broke up. I could not forbear dipping into them there; and shedding more tears over them than I will tell you of; although I dried my eyes as well as I could, that the company I was obliged to return to, and my mother, should see as little of my concern as possible.

I am yet (and was then still more) excessively fluttered. The occasion I will communicate to you by-and-by: for nothing but the flutters given by the stroke of death could divert my *first* attention from the sad and solemn contents of your last favour. These therefore I must begin with.

How can I bear the thoughts of losing so dear a friend! I will not so much as suppose it. Indeed I *cannot!* such a mind as your's was not vested in humanity to be snatched away from us so soon. There must be still a great deal for you to do for the good of all who have the happiness to know you.

You enumerate in your letter of Thursday last*, the particulars in which your situation is already mended: let me see by effects that you are in earnest in that enumeration; and that you really have the courage to resolve to get above the sense of injuries you could not avoid; and then will I trust to Providence and my humble prayers for your perfect recovery: and glad at my heart shall I be, on my return from the little island, to find you well enough to be near us according to the proposal Mr. Hickman has to make to you.

You chide me in your's of Sunday on the freedom I take with your friends†.

I *may* be warm. I know I *am*—too warm. Yet warmth in friendship, surely, cannot be a crime; espe-

* See Vol. VI. Letter LXXV. † Ibid, Letter XCII.

cially when our friend has great merit, labours under oppression, and is struggling with undeserved calamity.

I have no notion of coolness in friendship, be it dignified or distinguished by the name of *prudence*, or what it will.

You may excuse your relations. It was ever your way to do so. But, my dear, other people must be allowed to judge as they please. I am not *their* daughter, nor the sister of your brother and sister—I thank Heaven, I am not.

But if you are displeased with me for the freedoms I took so long ago as you mention, I am afraid, if you knew what passed upon an application I made to your sister very lately, (in hopes to procure you the absolution your heart is so much set upon,) that you would be still *more* concerned. But they have been even with me—but I must not tell you all. I hope, however, that these *unforgivers* [my mother is among them] were always good, dutiful, passive children to *their* parents.

Once more forgive me. I owned I was too warm. But I have no example to the contrary but from you: and the treatment you meet with is very little encouragement to me to endeavour to imitate you in your dutiful meekness.

You leave it to me to give a negative to the hopes of the noble family, whose only disgrace is, that so very vile a man is so nearly related to them. But yet—alas! my dear, I am so fearful of consequences, so *selfishly* fearful, if this negative must be given—I don't know what I should say—but give me leave to suspend, however, this negative till I hear from you again.

This earnest courtship of you into their splendid family is so *very* honourable to you—they *so justly* admire you

—you must have had such a *noble triumph* over the base man—he is so *much* in earnest—the world knows so *much* of the unhappy affair—you may do *still* so *much* good—your will is *so* inviolate—your relations are *so* implacable—think, my dear, and *re*-think.

And let me leave you to do so, while I give you the occasion of the flutter I mentioned at the beginning of this letter; in the conclusion of which you will find the obligation I have consented to lay myself under, to refer this important point once more to your discussion, before I give, in your name, the negative that cannot, when given, be with honour to yourself repented of or recalled.

Know then, my dear, that I accompanied my mother to Colonel Ambrose's on the occasion I mentioned to you in my former. Many ladies and gentlemen were there whom you know; particularly Miss Kitty D'Oily, Miss Lloyd, Miss Biddy D'Ollyffe, Miss Biddulph, and their respective admirers, with the Colonel's two nieces; fine women both; besides many whom you know not; for they were strangers to me but by name. A splendid company, and all pleased with one another, till Colonel Ambrose introduced one, who, the moment he was brought into the great hall, set the whole assembly into a kind of agitation.

It was your villain.

I thought I should have sunk as soon as I set my eyes upon him. My mother was also affected; and, coming to me, Nancy, whispered she, can you bear the sight of that wretch without too much emotion?—If not, withdraw into the next apartment.

I could not remove. Every body's eyes were glanced from him to me. I sat down and fanned myself, and was forced to order a glass of water. Oh! that I had the eye

the basilisk is reported to have, thought I, and that his life were within the power of it!—directly would I kill him.

He entered with an air so hateful to me, but so agreeable to every other eye, that I could have looked him dead for that too.

After the general salutations he singled out Mr. Hickman, and told him he had recollected some parts of his behaviour to him, when he saw him last, which had made him think himself under obligation to his patience and politeness.

And so, indeed, he was.

Miss D'Oily, upon his complimenting her, among a knot of ladies, asked him, in their hearing, how Miss Clarissa Harlowe did?

He heard, he said, you were not so well as he wished you to be, and as you deserved to be.

O Mr. Lovelace, said she, what have you to answer for on that young lady's account, if all be true that I have heard.

I have a great deal to answer for, said the unblushing villain: but that dear lady has so many excellencies, and so much delicacy, that little sins are great ones in her eye.

Little sins! replied Miss D'Oily: Mr. Lovelace's character is so well known, that nobody believes he can commit *little* sins.

You are very good to me, Miss D'Oily.

Indeed I am not.

Then I am the only person to whom you are *not* very good: and so I am the less obliged to you.

He turned, with an unconcerned air, to Miss Playford, and made her some genteel compliments. I believe you

know her not. She visits his cousins Montague. Indeed he had something in his specious manner to say to every body: and this too soon quieted the disgust each person had at his entrance.

I still kept my seat, and he either saw me not, or would not yet see me; and addressing himself to my mother, taking her unwilling hand, with an air of high assurance, I am glad to see you here, Madam, I hope Miss Howe is well. I have reason to complain greatly of her: but hope to owe to her the highest obligation that can be laid on man.

My daughter, Sir, is accustomed to be too warm and too zealous in her friendships for either my tranquillity or her own.

There had indeed been some late occasion given for mutual displeasure between my mother and me: but I think she might have spared this to *him;* though nobody heard it, I believe, but the person to whom it was spoken, and the lady who told it me; for my mother spoke it low.

We are not wholly, Madam, to live for ourselves, said the vile hypocrite: it is not every one who has a soul capable of friendship: and what a heart must that be, which can be insensible to the interests of a suffering friend?

This sentiment from Mr. Lovelace's mouth! said my mother—forgive me, Sir; but you can have no end, surely, in endeavouring to make *me* think as well of you as some innocent creatures have thought of you to their cost.

She would have flung from him. But, detaining her hand—Less severe, dear Madam, said he, be less severe in *this* place, I beseech you. You will allow, that a very faulty person may see his errors; and when he does, and owns them, and repents, should he not be treated mercifully?

Your air, Sir, seems not to be that of a penitent. But the place may as properly excuse this subject, as what you call my severity.

But, dearest Madam, permit me to say, that I hope for your interest with your *charming* daughter (was his sycophant word) to have it put in my power to convince all the world that there never was a truer penitent. And why, why this anger, dear Madam, (for she struggled to get her hand out of his,) these violent airs—so *maidenly!* [impudent fellow!]—May I not ask, if Miss Howe be here?

She would not have been here, replied my mother, had she known whom she had been to see.

And is she here, then?—Thank Heaven!—he disengaged her hand, and stept forward into company.

Dear Miss Lloyd, said he, with an air, (taking her hand as he quitted my mother's) tell me, tell me, is Miss Arabella Harlowe here? Or will she be here? I was informed she would—and this, and the opportunity of paying my compliments to your friend Miss Howe, were great inducements with me to attend the Colonel.

Superlative assurance! was it not, my dear?

Miss Arabella Harlowe, excuse me, Sir, said Miss Lloyd, would be very little inclined to meet you here, or any where else.

Perhaps so, my dear Miss Lloyd: but, perhaps, for that very reason, I am more desirous to see *her*.

Miss Harlowe, Sir, said Miss Biddulph, with a threatening air, will hardly be here without her *brother*. I imagine, if one comes, both will come.

Heaven grant they both may! said the wretch. Nothing, Miss Biddulph, shall begin from me to disturb this assembly, I assure you, if they do. One calm half-hour's

conversation with that brother and sister, would be a most fortunate opportunity to me, in presence of the Colonel and his lady, or whom else they should choose.

Then turning round, as if desirous to find out the one or the other, or both, he 'spied me, and with a very low bow, approached me.

I was all in a flutter, you may suppose. He would have taken my hand. I refused it, all glowing with indignation: every body's eyes upon us.

I went from him to the other end of the room, and sat down, as I thought, out of his hated sight; but presently I heard his odious voice, whispering, behind my chair, (he leaning upon the back of it, with impudent unconcern,) *Charming Miss Howe!* looking over my shoulder: *one request*—[I started up from my seat; but could hardly stand neither, for very indignation]—O this sweet, but becoming disdain! whispered on the insufferable creature—I am sorry to give you all this emotion: but either here, or at your own house, let me entreat from you one quarter of an hour's audience.—I beseech you, Madam, but one quarter of an hour, in any of the adjoining apartments.

Not for a *kingdom*, fluttering my fan. I knew not what I did.—But I could have killed him.

We are so much observed—else on my knees, my dear Miss Howe, would I beg your interest with your charming friend.

She'll have nothing to say to you.

(I had not then your letters, my dear.)

Killing words!—But indeed I have deserved them, and a dagger in my heart besides. I am so conscious of my demerits, that I have no hope, but in *your* interposition—could I owe that favour to Miss Howe's mediation which I cannot hope for on any other account—

My mediation, vilest of men!—*My* mediation!—I abhor you!—From my *soul*, I abhor you, vilest of men!—Three or four times I repeated these words, stammering too.—I was excessively fluttered.

You can tell me nothing, Madam, so bad as I will call myself. I *have* been, indeed, the vilest of men; but now I am not so. Permit me—every body's eyes are upon us!—but one moment's audience—to exchange but ten words with you, dearest Miss Howe—in whose presence you please—for your dear friend's sake—but ten words with you in the next apartment.

It is an insult upon me to presume that I would exchange *one* with you, if I could help it!—Out of my way! Out of my sight—fellow!

And away I would have flung: but he took my hand. I was excessively disordered—every body's eyes more and more intent upon us.

Mr. Hickman, whom my mother had drawn on one side, to enjoin him a patience, which perhaps needed not to have been enforced, came up just then, with my mother who had him by his leading-strings—by his sleeve I should say.

Mr. Hickman, said the bold wretch, be my advocate but for ten words in the next apartment with Miss Howe, in your presence; and in your's, Madam, to my mother.

Hear, Nancy, what he has to say to you. To get rid of him, hear his *ten words*.

Excuse me, Madam! his very breath—Unhand me, Sir!

He sighed and looked—O how the practised villain sighed and looked! He then let go my hand, with such a reverence in his manner, as brought blame upon me from some, that I would not hear him.—And this incensed me the more. O my dear, this man is a devil! This man is *in-*

deed a devil!—So much patience when he pleases! So much gentleness!—Yet so resolute, so persisting, so audacious!

I was going out of the assembly in great disorder. He was at the door as soon as I.

How kind this is, said the wretch; and, ready to follow me, opened the door for me.

I turned back upon this: and, not knowing what I did, snapped my fan just in his face, as he turned short upon me; and the powder flew from his hair.

Every body seemed as much pleased as I was vexed.

He turned to Mr. Hickman, nettled at the powder flying, and at the smiles of the company upon him; Mr. Hickman, you will be one of the happiest men in the world, because you are a *good* man, and will do nothing to provoke this passionate lady; and because she has too much good sense to be provoked without reason: but else the Lord have mercy upon you!

This man, this Mr. Hickman, my dear, is too meek for a man. Indeed he is.—But my patient mother twits me, that her passionate daughter ought to like him *the better* for that. But meek men abroad are not always meek men at home. I have observed that in more instances than one: and if they *were*, I should not, I verily think, like them the better for being so.

He then turned to my mother, resolved to be even with *her* too: Where, good Madam, could Miss Howe get all this spirit?

The company around smiled; for I need not tell you that my mother's high spiritedness is pretty well known; and she, sadly vexed, said, Sir, you treat me, as you do the rest of the world—but—

I beg pardon, Madam, interrupted he: I might have

spared my question—and instantly (I retiring to the other end of the hall) he turned to Miss Playford; What would I give, Madam, to hear you sing that song you obliged us with at Lord M.'s!

He then, as if nothing had happened, fell into a conversation with her and Miss D'Ollyffe, upon music; and whisperingly sung to Miss Playford; holding her two hands, with such airs of genteel unconcern, that it vexed me not a little to look round, and see how pleased half the giddy fools of our sex were with him, notwithstanding his notorious wicked character. To this it is that such vile fellows owe much of their vileness: whereas, if they found themselves shunned, and despised, and treated as beasts of prey, as they are, they would run to their caverns; there howl by themselves; and none but such as sad accident, or unpitiable presumption, threw in their way, would suffer by them.

He afterwards talked very seriously, at times, to Mr. Hickman: at *times*, I say; for it was with such breaks and starts of gaiety, turning to this lady, and to that, and then to Mr. Hickman again, resuming a serious or a gay air at pleasure, that he took every body's eye, the women's especially; who were full of their whispering admirations of him, qualified with *if's*, and *but's*, and *what pity's*, and such sort of stuff, that showed in their very dispraises too much liking.

Well may our sex be the sport and ridicule of such libertines! Unthinking eye-governed creatures!—Would not a little reflection teach us, that a man of merit must be a man of modesty, because a diffident one? and that such a wretch as this must have taken his degrees in wickedness, and gone through a course of vileness, before he could arrive at this impenetrable effrontery? an effrontery

which can proceed only from the light opinion he has of us, and the high one of himself.

But our sex are generally modest and bashful themselves, and are too apt to consider that which in the main is their principal grace, as a defect: and *finely* do they judge, when they think of supplying that defect by choosing a man that cannot be ashamed.

His discourse to Mr. Hickman turned upon you, and his acknowledged injuries of you: though he could so lightly start from the subject, and return to it.

I have no patience with such a devil—*man* he cannot be called. To be sure he would behave in the same manner any where, or in any presence, even at the altar itself, if a woman were with him there.

It shall ever be a rule with me, that he who does not regard a woman with some degree of reverence, will look upon her and occasionally *treat* her with contempt.

He had the confidence to offer to take me out; but I absolutely refused him, and shunned him all I could, putting on the most contemptuous airs; but nothing could mortify him.

I wished twenty times I had not been there.

The gentlemen were as ready as I to wish he had broken his neck, rather than been present, I believe: for nobody was regarded but he. So little of the fop; yet so elegant and rich in his dress: his person so specious: his air so intrepid: so much meaning and penetration in his face: so much gaiety, yet so little of the monkey: though a travelled gentleman, yet no affectation; no mere toupet-man; but all manly; and his courage and wit, the one so known, the other so dreaded, you must think the *petits-maîtres* (of which there were four or five present) were most deplorably off in his company; and one grave gentleman observed

to me, (pleased to see me shun him as I did,) that the poet's observation was too true, that the generality of ladies were *rakes in their hearts*, or they could not be so much taken with a man who had so notorious a character.

I told him the reflection both of the poet and applier was much too general, and made with more ill-nature than good manners.

When the wretch saw how industriously I avoided him, (shifting from one part of the hall to another,) he at last boldly stept up to me, as my mother and Mr. Hickman were talking to me; and thus before them accosted me:

I beg your pardon, Madam; but by your mother's leave, I must have a few moments' conversation with you, either here, or at your own house; and I beg you will give me the opportunity.

Nancy, said my mother, hear what he has to say to you. In my presence you may: and better in the adjoining apartment, if it must be, than to come to you at our own house.

I retired to one corner of the hall, my mother following me, and he, taking Mr. Hickman under his arm, following her—Well, Sir, said I, what have you to say?—Tell me *here*.

I have been telling Mr. Hickman, said he, how much I am concerned for the injuries I have done to the most excellent woman in the world: and yet, that she obtained such a glorious triumph over me the last time I had the honour to see her, as, with my penitence, ought to have abated her former resentments: but that I will, with all my soul, enter into any measures to obtain her forgiveness of me. My cousins Montague have told you this. Lady Betty and Lady Sarah and my Lord M. are engaged for my honour. I know your power with the dear creature.

My cousins told me you gave them hopes you would use it in my behalf. My Lord M. and his two sisters are impatiently expecting the fruits of it. You must have heard from her before now: I hope you have. And will you be so good as to tell me, if I may have any hopes?

If I must speak on this subject, let me tell you that you have broken her heart. You know not the value of the lady you have injured. You deserve her not. And she despises you, as she ought.

Dear Miss Howe, mingle not passion with denunciations so severe. I must know my fate. I will go abroad once more, if I find her absolutely irreconcileable. But I hope she will give me leave to attend upon her, to know my doom from her own mouth.

It would be death immediate for her to see you. And what must *you* be, to be able to look her in the face?

I then reproached him (with vehemence enough you may believe) on his baseness, and the evils he had made you suffer: the distress he had reduced you to; all your friends made your enemies: the vile house he had carried you to: hinted at his villanous arts; the dreadful arrest: and told him of your present deplorable illness, and resolution to die rather than have him.

He vindicated not any part of his conduct, but that of the arrest; and so solemnly protested his sorrow for his usage of you, accusing himself in the freest manner, and by *deserved* apellations, that I promised to lay before you this part of our conversation. And now you have it.

My mother, as well as Mr. Hickman, believes, from what passed on this occasion, that he is touched in conscience for the wrongs he has done you: but, by his whole behaviour, I must own, it seems to me that nothing can touch him for half an hour together. Yet I have no

doubt that he would willingly marry you; and it piques his pride, I could see, that he should be denied; as it did mine, that such a wretch had dared to think it in his power to have such a woman whenever he pleased; and that it must be accounted a condescension, and matter of obligation (by all his own family at least) that he would vouchsafe to think of marriage.

Now, my dear, you have before you the reason why I suspend the decisive negative to the ladies of his family. My mother, Miss Lloyd, and Miss Biddulph, who were inquisitive after the subject of our retired conversation, and whose curiosity I thought it was right, in some degree, to gratify, (especially as these young ladies are of our select acquaintance,) are all of opinion that you should be his.

You will let Mr. Hickman know your whole mind; and when he acquaints me with it, I will tell you all my own.

Mean time, may the news he will bring me of the state of your health be favourable! prays, with the utmost fervency,

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER VII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

MY DEAREST MISS HOWE, Thursday, July 27.

AFTER I have thankfully acknowledged your favour in sending Mr. Hickman to visit me before you set out upon

your intended journey, I must chide you (in the sincerity of that faithful love, which could not be the love it is if it would not admit of that *cementing* freedom) for suspending the decisive negative, which, upon such full deliberation, I had entreated you to give to Mr. Lovelace's relations.

I am sorry that I am obliged to *repeat* to you, my dear, who know me so well, that, were I sure I should live *many years*, I would not have Mr. Lovelace; much less can I think of him, as it is probable I may not live *one*.

As to the *world* and its *censures*, you know, my dear, that, however desirous I always was of a fair fame, yet I never thought it right to give more than a *second place* to the world's opinion. The challenges made to Mr. Lovelace, by Miss D'Oyly, in public company, are a fresh proof that I have lost my reputation: and what advantage would it be to me, were it retrievable, and were I to live long, if I could not acquit myself to *myself?*

Having in my former said so much on the freedoms you have taken with my friends, I shall say the less now; but *your hint*, that something else has newly passed between some of them and you, gives me great concern, and that as well for *my own* sake as for *theirs*, since it must necessarily incense them against me. I wish, my dear, that I had been left to my own course on an occasion so very interesting to myself. But, since what is done cannot be helped, I must abide the consequences: yet I dread *more than before*, what may be my sister's answer, if an answer will be at all vouchsafed.

Will you give me leave, my dear, to close this subject with one remark?—It is this: that my beloved friend, in points where her own laudable *zeal* is concerned, has ever seemed more ready to fly from the *rebuke*, than from the *fault*. If you will excuse this freedom, I will acknowledge

thus far in favour of your way of thinking, as to the conduct of some parents in these nice cases, that *indiscreet* opposition does frequently as much mischief as *giddy* love.

As to the invitation you are so kind as to give me, to remove privately into your neighbourhood, I have told Mr. Hickman that I will consider of it; but believe, if you will be so good as to excuse me, that I shall not accept of it, even should I be able to remove. I will give you my reasons for declining it; and so I ought, when both my love and my gratitude would make a visit now-and-then from my dear Miss Howe the most consolate thing in the world to me.

You must know then, that this great town, wicked as it is, wants not opportunities of being better; having daily prayers at several churches in it; and I am desirous, as my strength will permit, to embrace those opportunities. The method I have proposed to myself (and was beginning to practise when that cruel arrest deprived me both of freedom and strength) is this: when I was disposed to gentle exercise, I took a chair to St. Dunstan's church in Fleet-street, where are prayers at seven in the morning; I proposed, *if the weather favoured*, to walk (*if not*, to take chair) to Lincoln's-inn chapel, where, at eleven in the morning, and at five in the afternoon, are the same desirable opportunities; and at other times to go no farther than Covent-garden church, where are early morning prayers likewise.

This method pursued, I doubt not, will greatly help, as it has already done, to calm my disturbed thoughts, and to bring me to that perfect resignation after which I aspire: for I must own, my dear, that sometimes still my griefs and my reflections are too heavy for me; and all the aid I ca draw from *religious duties* is hardly sufficient to support

my staggering reason. I am a very young creature you know, my dear, to be left to my own conduct in such circumstances as I am in.

Another reason why I choose not to go down into your neighbourhood, is the displeasure that might arise, on my account, between your mother and you.

If indeed you were actually married, and the worthy man (who would then have a title to all your regard) were earnestly desirous of near neighbourhood, I know not what I might do: for although I might not perhaps intend to give up my other important reasons at the time I should make you a congratulatory visit, yet I might not know how to deny myself the pleasure of continuing near you when there.

I send you enclosed the copy of my letter to my sister. I hope it will be thought to be written with a true penitent spirit; for indeed it is. I desire that you will not think I stoop too low in it; since there can be no such a thing as *that* in a child to parents whom she has unhappily offended.

But if still (perhaps more disgusted than before at your freedom with them) they should pass it by with the contempt of silence, (for I have not yet been favoured with an answer,) I must learn to think it right in them to do so; especially as it is my first direct application: for I have often censured the boldness of those, who, applying for a favour, which it is in a person's option to grant or to refuse, take the liberty of being offended, if they are not gratified; as if the *petitioned* had not as good a right *to reject*, as the *petitioner to ask*.

But if my letter should be answered, and that in such terms as will make me loth to communicate it to so warm a friend—you must not, my dear, take upon you to cen-

ure my relations; but allow for them as they know not what I have suffered; as being filled with *just* resentments against me, (*just* to them if they think them just;) and as not being able to judge of the reality of my penitence.

And after all, what can they do for me?—They can only pity me: and what will that but augment their own *grief;* to which at present their *resentment* is an alleviation? for can they by their pity restore to me my lost reputation? Can they by it purchase a sponge that will wipe out from the year the past fatal four months of my life*?

Your account of the gay, unconcerned behaviour of Mr. Lovelace, at the Colonel's, does not surprise me at all, after I am told that he had the intrepidity to go there, knowing who were *invited* and *expected.*—Only this, my dear, I really wonder at, that Miss Howe could imagine that I could have a thought of such a man for a husband.

Poor wretch! I pity him, to see him fluttering about; abusing talents that were given him for excellent purposes; taking in consideration for courage; and dancing, fearless of danger, on the edge of a precipice!

But indeed his threatening to see me most sensibly alarms and shocks me. I cannot but hope that I never, never more shall see him in this world.

Since you are so loth, my dear, to send the desired negative to the ladies of his family, I will only trouble you to transmit the letter I shall enclose for that purpose; directed indeed to yourself, because it was to you that those ladies applied themselves on this occasion; but to be sent by you to any one of the ladies, at your own choice.

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* She takes in the time that she appointed to meet Mr. Lovelace.

I commend myself, my dearest Miss Howe, to your prayers; and conclude with repeated thanks for sending Mr. Hickman to me; and with wishes for your health and happiness, and for the speedy celebration of your nuptials;

Your ever affectionate and obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER VIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

[*Enclosed in the preceding.*]

MY DEAREST MISS HOWE, Thursday, July 27.

SINCE you seem loth to acquiesce in my determined resolution, signified to you as soon as I was able to hold a pen, I beg the favour of you, by this, or by any other way you think most proper, to acquaint the worthy ladies, who have applied to you in behalf of their relation, that although I am infinitely obliged to their generous opinion of me, yet I cannot consent to *sanctify*, as I may say, Mr. Lovelace's repeated breaches of all moral sanctions, and hazard my *future* happiness by an union with a man, through whose premeditated injuries, in a long train of the basest contrivances, I have forfeited my *temporal* hopes.

He himself, when he reflects upon his own actions, must surely bear testimony to the justice as well as fitness of my determination. The ladies, I dare say, would, were they to know the whole of my unhappy story.

Be pleased to acquaint them that I deceive myself, if my resolution on this head (however ungratefully and even in-

humanly he has treated me) be not owing more to *principle* than *passion*. Nor can I give a stronger proof of the truth of this assurance, than by declaring that I *can* and *will* forgive him, on this one easy condition, *that he will never molest me more*.

In whatever way you choose to make this declaration, be pleased to let my most respectful compliments to the ladies of that noble family, and to my Lord M., accompany it. And do you, my dear, believe that I shall be, to the last moment of my life,

Your ever obliged and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER IX.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Friday, July 28.

I HAVE three letters of thine to take notice of*: but am divided in my mind, whether to quarrel with thee on thy unmerciful reflections, or to thank thee for thy acceptable particularity and diligence. But several of my sweet dears have I, indeed, in my time, made to cry and laugh in a breath; nay, one side of their pretty faces laugh before the cry could go off the other: Why may I not, therefore, curse and applaud thee in the same moment? So take both in one: and what follows, as it shall rise from my pen.

How often have I ingenuously confessed my sins against

* Letters III. IV. and V. of this volume.

this excellent creeature?—Yet thou never sparest me, although as bad a man as myself. Since then I get so little by my confessions, I had a good mind to try to defend myself; and that not only from antient and modern story, but from common practice; and yet avoid repeating any thing I have suggested before in my own behalf.

I am in a humour to play the fool with my pen: briefly then, from antient story first:—Dost thou not think that I am as much entitled to forgiveness on Miss Harlowe's account, as Virgil's hero was on Queen Dido's? For what an ungrateful varlet was that vagabond to the *hospitable* princess, who had *willingly* conferred upon him the last favour?—Stealing away, (whence, I suppose, the ironical phrase of *trusty Trojan* to this day,) like a thief—pretendedly indeed at the command of the gods; but could that be, when the errand he went upon was to rob other princes, not only of their dominions, but of their lives?—Yet this fellow is, at every word, the *pious* Æneas, with the immortal bard who celebrates him.

Should Miss Harlowe even break her heart, (which Heaven forbid!) for the usage she has received, (to say nothing of her disappointed pride, to which her death would be attributable, more than to reason,) what comparison will *her* fate hold to Queen Dido's? And have I half the obligation to her, that Æneas had to the Queen of Carthage? The latter placing a confidence, the former none, in her man?—Then, whom *else* have I robbed? Whom *else* have I injured? Her brother's worthless life I gave him, instead of taking any man's; while the Trojan vagabond destroyed his thousands. Why then should it not be the *pious* Lovelace, as well as the *pious*

Æneas? For, dost thou think, had a conflagration happened, and had it been in my power, that I would not have saved my old Anchises, (as he did his from the Ilion bonfire,) even at the expense of my Creüsa, had I had a wife of that name?

But for a more modern instance in my favour—Have I used Miss Harlowe, as our famous Maiden Queen, as she was called, used one of her own blood, a sister-queen, who threw herself into her protection from her rebel-subjects, and whom she detained prisoner eighteen years, and at last cut off her head? Yet do not honest protestants pronounce *her* pious too?—And call her particularly *their* Queen?

As to *common practice*—Who, let me ask, that has it in his power to gratify a predominant passion, be it what it will, denies himself the gratification?—Leaving it to cooler deliberation, (and, if he be a great man, to his flatterers,) to find a reason for it afterwards?

Then, as to the worst part of my treatment of this lady How many men are there, who, as well as I, have sought, by intoxicating liquors, first to inebriate, then to subdue? What signifies what the *potations* were, when the same end was in view?

Let me tell thee, upon the whole, that neither the Queen of Carthage, nor the Queen of Scots, would have thought they had any reason to complain of cruelty, had they been used no worse than I have used the queen of my heart: And then do I not aspire with my whole soul to repair by marriage? Would the *pious* Æneas, thinkest thou, have done such a piece of justice by Dido, had she lived?

Come, come, Belford, let people run away with notions as they will, I am *comparatively* a very innocent man.

And if by these, and other like reasonings, I have quieted my own conscience, a great end is answered. What have I to do with the world?

And now I sit me peaceably down to consider thy letters.

I hope thy pleas in my favour*, when she gave thee, (so generously gave thee,) for me my letters, were urged with an honest energy. But *I* suspect thee much for being too ready to give up thy client. Then thou hast such a misgiving aspect, an aspect rather inviting rejection than carrying persuasion with it; and art such an hesitating, such a humming and hawing caitiff; that I shall attribute my failure, if I do fail, rather to the inability and ill looks of my advocate, than to my cause. Again, thou art deprived of the force men of our cast give to arguments; for she won't let thee *swear!*—Art, moreover, a very heavy, thoughtless fellow; tolerable only at a second rebound; a horrid dunce at the *impromptu*. These, encountering with such a lady, are great disadvantages.—And still a greater is thy balancing, (as thou dost at present,) between old rakery and new reformation; since this puts thee into the same situation with her, as they told me, at Leipsick, Martin Luther was in, at the first public dispute which he held in defence of his supposed *new* doctrines with Eckius. For Martin was then but a linsey-wolsey reformer. He retained some dogmas, which, by natural consequence, made others, that he held, untenable. So that Eckius, in some points, had the better of him. But, from that time, he made clear work, renouncing all that stood in his way: and then his doctrines ran upon all fours. He was never puzzled afterwards; and could

* See Letter IV. of this volume.

boldly declare that he would defend them in the face of angels and men; and to his friends, who would have dissuaded him from venturing to appear before the Emperor Charles the Fifth at Spires, *That, were there as many devils at Spires, as tiles upon the houses, he would go.* An answer that is admired by every protestant Saxon to this day.

Since then thy unhappy awkwardness destroys the force of thy arguments, I think thou hadst better (for the present, however) forbear to urge her on the subject of accepting the reparation I offer; lest the continual teasing of her to forgive me should but strengthen her in her denials of forgiveness; till, for *consistency* sake, she'll be forced to adhere to a resolution so often avowed—Whereas, if left to herself, a little time, and better health, which will bring on better spirits, will give her quicker resentments; those quicker resentments will lead her into vehemence; that vehemence will subside, and turn into expostulation and parley: my friends will then interpose, and guaranty for me: and all our trouble on both sides will be over.—Such is the natural course of things.

I cannot endure thee for thy hopelessness in the lady's recovery*; and that in contradiction to the doctor and apothecary.

Time, in the words of Congreve, thou sayst, *will give increase to her afflictions.* But why so? Knowest thou not that those words (so contrary to common experience) were applied to the case of a person, while passion was in its full vigour?—At such a time, every one in a heavy grief *thinks* the same: but as enthusiasts do by Scripture, so dost thou by the poets thou hast read: any thing that

* See Letter IV. of this volume.

carries the most distant allusion from *either* to the case in hand, is put down by both for gospel, however incongruous to the general scope of either, and to *that case*. So once, in a pulpit, I heard one of the former very vehemently declare himself to be a *dead dog;* when every man, woman, and child, were convinced to the contrary by his howling.

I can tell thee that, if nothing else will do, I am determined, in spite of thy buskin-airs, and of thy engagements for me to the contrary, to see her myself.

Face to face have I known many a quarrel made up, which distance would have kept alive, and widened. Thou wilt be a madder Jack than he in the Tale of a Tub, if thou givest an *active* opposition to this interview.

In short, I cannot bear the thought, that a woman whom once I had bound to me in the silken cords of love, should slip through my fingers, and be able, while *my* heart flames out with a violent passion for her, to despise me, and to set both love and me at defiance. Thou canst not imagine how much I envy *thee*, and her *doctor*, and her *apothecary*, and every one who I hear are admitted to her presence and conversation; and wish to be the *one* or the *other* in turn.

Wherefore, if nothing else will do, I *will* see her. I'll tell thee of an admirable expedient, just come cross me, to save *thy* promise, and *my own*.

Mrs. Lovick, you say, is a good woman: if the lady be worse, she shall advise her to send for a parson to pray by her: unknown to her, unknown to the lady, unknown to *thee*, (for so it may pass,) I will contrive to be the man, *petticoated out*, and vested in a gown and cassock. I once, for a certain purpose, did assume the canonicals;

and I was thought to make a fine sleek appearance; my broad rose-bound beaver became me *mightily;* and I was much admired upon the whole by all who saw me.

Methinks it must be charmingly *a propos* to see me kneeling down by her bed-side, (I am sure I shall pray heartily,) beginning out of the common-prayer book the sick-office for the restoration of the languishing lady, and concluding with an exhortation to charity and forgiveness for myself.

I will consider of this matter. But, in whatever shape I shall choose to appear, of this thou mayst assure thyself, I will apprize thee beforehand of my visit, that thou mayst contrive to be out of the way, and to know nothing of the matter. This will save *thy* word; and, as to *mine*, can she think worse of me than she does at present?

An indispensable of true love and profound respect, in thy wise opinion*, is absurdity or awkwardness.—'Tis surprising that *thou* shouldst be one of those partial mortals who take their measures of right and wrong from what they find *themselves to be*, and cannot *help being!*—So awkwardness is a perfection in the awkward!—At this rate, no man ever can be in the wrong. But I insist upon it, that an awkward fellow will do every thing awkwardly: and, if he be like thee, will, when he has done foolishly, rack his unmeaning brain for excuses as awkward as his first fault. Respectful love is an inspirer of actions worthy of itself; and he who cannot show it, where he most means it, manifests that he is an unpolite rough creature, a perfect Belford, and has it not in him.

But here thou'lt throw out that notable witticism, that

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* See Letter III. of this volume.

my outside is the best of *me*, thine the worst of *thee;* and that, if I set about mending my mind, thou wilt mend thy appearance.

But, pr'ythee, Jack, don't stay for *that;* but set about thy amendment in dress when thou leavest off thy mourning; for why shouldst thou prepossess in thy disfavour all those who never saw thee before?—It is hard to remove early-taken prejudices, whether of liking or distaste. People will *hunt*, as I may say, for reasons to confirm first impressions, in compliment to their own sagacity: nor is it every mind that has the ingenuousness to confess itself mistaken, when it finds itself to be wrong. Thou thyself art an adept in the pretended science of reading men; and, whenever thou art out, wilt study to find some reasons why it was more probable that thou shouldst have been right; and wilt watch every motion and action, and every word and sentiment, in the person thou hast once censured, for proofs, in order to help thee to revive and maintain thy first opinion. And, indeed, as thou seldom errest on the *favourable side*, human nature is so vile a thing that thou art likely to be right five times in six on the *other:* and perhaps it is but guessing of others, by what thou findest in thy own heart, to have reason to compliment thyself on thy penetration.

Here is preachment for thy preachment: and I hope, if thou likest thy own, thou wilt thank me for mine; the rather, as thou mayest be the better for it, if thou wilt: since it is calculated for thy own meridian.

Well, but the lady refers my destiny to the letter she has written, *actually written*, to Miss Howe; to whom it seems she has given her reasons why she will not have me. I long to know the contents of this letter: but am in great hopes that she has so expressed her denials, as

shall give room to think she only wants to be persuaded to the contrary, in order to reconcile herself to herself.

I could make some pretty observations upon one or two places of the lady's meditation: but, wicked as I am thought to be, I never was so abandoned as to turn into ridicule, or even to treat with levity, things sacred. I think it the highest degree of ill manners to jest upon those subjects which the world in general look upon with veneration, and call divine. I would not even treat the mythology of the heathen to a heathen, with the ridicule that perhaps would fairly lie from some of the absurdities that strike every common observer. Nor, when at Rome, and in other popish countries, did I ever behave indecently at those ceremonies which I thought very extraordinary: for I saw some people affected, and seemingly edified, by them; and I contented myself to think, though they were beyond my comprehension, that if they answered any good end to the *many*, there was religion enough in them, or civil policy at least, to exempt them from the ridicule of even a *bad* man who had common sense and good manners.

For the like reason I have never given noisy or tumultuous instances of dislike to a new play, if I thought it ever so indifferent: for I concluded, first, that every one was entitled to see quietly what he paid for: and, next, as the theatre (the epitome of the world) consisted of pit, boxes, and gallery, it was hard, I thought, if there could be such a performance exhibited as would not please somebody in that mixed multitude: and, if it did, those somebodies had as much right to enjoy their own judgments, undisturbedly, as I had to enjoy mine.

This was *my* way of showing my disapprobation; I never went again. And as a man is at his option, whe-

ther he will go to a play or not, he has not the same excuse for expressing his dislike clamorously as if he were *compelled* to see it.

I have ever, thou knowest, declared against those shallow libertines, who could not make out their pretensions to wit, but on two subjects, to which every man of *true* wit will scorn to be beholden: PROFANENESS and OBSCENITY, I mean; which must shock the ears of every man or woman of sense, without answering any end, but of showing a very low and abandoned nature. And, till I came acquainted with the brutal Mowbray, [no great praise to myself from such a tutor,] I was far from making so free as I now do, with oaths and curses; for then I was forced to out-swear him sometimes in order to keep him in his allegiance to me his general: nay, I often check myself to myself, for this empty unprofitable liberty of speech; in which we are outdone by the sons of the common-sewer.

All my vice is women, and the love of plots and intrigues; and I cannot but wonder how I fell into those shocking freedoms of speech; since, generally speaking, they are far from helping forward my main end: only, now-and-then, indeed, a little novice rises to one's notice, who seems to think dress, and oaths, and curses, the diagnostics of the rakish spirit she is inclined to favour: and indeed they are the only qualifications that some who are called rakes and pretty fellows have to boast of. But what must the women be, who can be attracted by such *empty-souled* profligates!—since wickedness *with* wit is hardly tolerable; but, *without* it, is equally shocking and contemptible.

There again is preachment for thy preachment; and thou wilt be apt to think that I am reforming too: but

no such matter. If this were *new light* darting in upon me, as thy morality seems to be to thee, something of this kind might be apprehended: but this was *always* my way of thinking; and I defy thee, or any of thy brethren, to name a time when I have either ridiculed religion, or talked obscenely. On the contrary, thou knowest how often I have checked that bear, in love-matters, Mowbray, and the finical Tourville, and thyself too, for what ye have called the double-entendre. In *love*, as in points that required a *manly resentment*, it has always been my maxim, to *act*, rather than *talk*; and I do assure thee, as to the first, the women themselves will excuse the one sooner than the other.

As to the admiration thou expressest for the books of scripture, thou art certainly right in it. But 'tis strange to me, that thou wert ignorant of their beauty, and noble simplicity, till now. Their antiquity always made me reverence them: And how was it possible that thou couldest not, for that reason, if for no other, give them a perusal?

I'll tell thee a short story, which I had from my tutor, admonishing me against exposing myself by *ignorant wonder*, when I should quit college, to go to town, or travel.

'The first time Dryden's Alexander's Feast fell into his 'hands, he told me, he was prodigiously charmed with it: 'and, having never heard any body speak of it before, 'thought, as thou dost of the Bible, that he had made a 'new discovery.

'He hastened to an appointment which he had with 'several wits, (for he was then in town,) one of whom was 'a noted critic, who, according to him, had more 'merit than good fortune; for all the little nibblers in

'wit, whose writings would not stand the test of criticism, 'made it, he said, a common cause to run him down, as 'men would a mad dog.

'The young gentleman (for young he then was) set 'forth magnificently in the praises of that inimitable per- 'formance; and gave himself airs of *second-hand* merit, 'for finding out its beauties.

'The old bard heard him out with a smile, which the 'collegian took for approbation, till he spoke; and then 'it was in these mortifying words: 'Sdeath, Sir, where 'have you lived till now, or with what sort of company 'have you conversed, young as you are, that you have 'never before heard of the finest piece in the English 'language?'

This story had such an effect upon *me*, who had ever a proud heart, and wanted to be thought a clever fellow, that, in order to avoid the like disgrace, I laid down two rules to myself. The first, whenever I went into company where there were strangers, to hear every one of them speak, before I gave myself liberty to prate: The other, if I found any of them above my match, to give up all title to new discoveries, contenting myself to praise what they praised, as beauties familiar to me, though I had never heard of them before. And so, by degrees, I got the reputation of a wit myself: and when I threw off all restraint, and books, and learned conversation, and fell in with some of our brethren who are now wandering in Erebus, and with such others as Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and thyself, I set up on my own stock; and, like what we have been told of Sir Richard, in his latter days, valued myself on being the emperor of the company; for, having fathomed the depth of them all, and afraid of no rival but thee, whom also I had got a little

under, (by my gaiety and promptitude at least) I proudly, like Addison's Cato, delighted to give laws to my little senate.

Proceed with thee by-and-by.

LETTER X.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

But now I have cleared myself of any *intentional* levity on occasion of my beloved's meditation; which, as you observe, is finely suited to her case, (that is to say, as she and you have drawn her case;) I canot help expressing my pleasure, that by one or two verses of it, [the *arrow*, Jack, and *what she feared being come upon her!*] I am encouraged to hope, what it will be very surprising to me if it do not happen: that is, in plain English, that the dear creature is in the way to be a mamma.

This cursed arrest, because of the ill effects the terror might have had upon her, in that hoped-for circumstance, has concerned me more than on any other account. It would be the pride of my life to prove, in this charming frost-piece, the triumph of Nature over principle, and to have a young Lovelace by such an angel: and then, for its sake, I am confident she will live, and will legitimate it. And what a meritorious little cherub would it be, that should lay an obligation upon both parents before it was born, which neither of them would be able to repay!—Could I be sure it is so, I should be out of all pain for her recovery: *pain*, I say; since, were she to *die*—[*die!*

abominable word! how I hate it!] I verily think I should be the most miserable man in the world.

As for the earnestness she expresses for death, she has found the words ready to her hand in honest Job; else she would not have delivered herself with such strength and vehemence.

Her innate piety (as I have more than once observed) will not permit her to shorten her own life, either by violence or neglect. She has a mind too noble for that; and would have done it before now, had she designed any such thing: for to do it, like the Roman matron, when the mischief is over, and it can serve no end; and when the man, however a Tarquin, as some may think me in this action, is not a Tarquin in power, so that no *national point* can be made of it; is what she has too much good sense to think of.

Then, as I observed in a like case, a little while ago, the distress, when this was written, was strong upon her; and she saw no end of it: but all was darkness and apprehension before her. Moreover, has she it not in her power to *disappoint*, as much as she been *disappointed?* Revenge, Jack, has induced many a woman to cherish a life, to which grief and despair would otherwise have put an end.

And, after all, death is no such eligible thing, as Job in his *calamities*, makes it. And a death desired merely from worldly disappointments shows not a right mind, let me tell this lady, whatever *she* may think of it*. You

* Mr. Lovelace could not know, that the lady was *so* thoroughly sensible of the solidity of this doctrine, as she really was: for, in her letter to Mrs. Norton, (Letter I. of this volume,) she says,—'Nor 'let it be imagined, that my present turn of mind proceeds from

and I Jack, although not afraid, in the height of passion or resentment, to rush into those dangers which might be followed by a sudden and violent death, whenever a point of honour calls upon us, would shudder at his cool and deliberate approach in a lingering sickness, which had debilitated the spirits.

So we read of a famous French general [I forget as well the reign of the prince as the name of the man] who, having faced with intrepidity the ghastly varlet on an hundred occasions in the field, was the most dejected of wretches, when, having forfeited his life for treason, he was led with all the cruel parade of preparation, and surrounding guards, to the scaffold.

The poet says well:

> 'Tis not the stoic lesson, got by rote,
> The pomp of words, and pedant dissertation,
> That can support us in the hour of terror.
> Books have taught cowards to talk nobly of it:
> But when the *trial* comes, they start, and stand aghast.

Very true: for then it is the old man in the fable, with his bundle of sticks.

The lady is well read in Shakspeare, our English pride and glory; and must sometimes reason with herself in his words, so greatly expressed, that the subject, affecting as it is, cannot produce any thing greater.

' gloominess or melancholy: for although it was brought on by dis-
' appointment, (the world showing me early, even at my first *rushing*
' into it, its true and ugly face,) yet I hope, that it has obtained a
' better root, and will every day more and more, by its fruits, demon-
' strate to me, and to all my friends, that it has.'

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible, warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice:
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
Or blown, with restless violence, about
The pendent worlds; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless and uncertain thought
Imagines howling: 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loaded worldly life,
That pain, age, penury, and *imprisonment*,
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.————

I find, by one of thy three letters, that my beloved had some account from Hickman of my interview with Miss Howe, at Col. Ambrose's. I had a very agreeable time of it there; although severely rallied by several of the assembly. It concerns me, however, not a little, to find our affair so generally known among the *flippanti* of both sexes. It is all her own fault. There never, surely, was such an odd little soul as this.—Not to keep her own secret, when the revealing of it could answer no possible good end; and when she wants not (one would think) to raise to herself either pity or friends, or to me enemies, by the proclamation!—Why, Jack, must not all her own sex laugh in their sleeves at her weakness? what would become of the peace of the world, if all women should take it into their heads to follow her example? what a fine time of it would the heads of families have? Their wives always filling their ears with *their* confessions; their daughters with *theirs:* sisters would be every day setting their bro-

thers about cutting of throats, if the brothers had at heart *the honour of their families*, as it is called; and the whole world would either be a scene of confusion; or cuckoldom as much the fashion as it is in Lithuania*.

I am glad, however, that Miss Howe (as much as she hates me) kept her word with my cousins on their visit to her, and with me at the Colonel's, to endeavour to persuade her friend to make up all matters by matrimony; which, no doubt, is the best, nay, the *only* method she can take, for her own honour, and that of her family.

I had once thoughts of revenging myself on that vixen, and, particularly, as thou mayest† remember, had planned something to this purpose on the journey she is going to take, which had been talked of some time. But, I think—let me see—yes, I *think*, I will let this Hickman have her safe and entire, as thou believest the fellow to be a tolerable sort of a mortal, and that I had made *the worst of him:* and I am glad, for his own sake, he has not launched out too virulently against me to thee.

But thou seest, Jack, by her refusal of money from him, or Miss Howe‡, that the dear extravagant takes a delight in oddnesses, choosing to part with her clothes, though for a song. Dost think she is not a little touched at times? I am afraid she is. A little spice of that insanity, I doubt, runs through her, that she had in a stronger degree, in the first week of my operations. Her contempt of life; her proclamations; her refusal of matrimony; and now of

* In Lithuania, the women are said to have *so allowedly* their gallants, called *adjutores*, that the husbands hardly ever enter upon any party of pleasure without them.

† See Vol. IV. Letter XLII.

‡ See Letter V. of this volume.

money from her most intimate friends; are sprinklings of this kind, and no other way, I think, to be accounted for.

Her apothecary is a good honest fellow. I like him much. But the silly dear's harping so continually upon one string, dying, dying, dying, is what I have no patience with. I hope all this melancholy jargon is owing entirely to the way I would have her to be in. And it being as new to her, as the Bible beauties to thee*, no wonder she knows not what to make of herself; and so fancies she is breeding death, when the event will turn out quite the contrary.

Thou art a sorry fellow in thy remarks on the education and qualification of smarts and beaux of the rakish order; if by thy *we's* and *us's* thou meanest thyself or me†: for I pretend to say, that the picture has no resemblance of us, who have read and conversed as we have done. It may indeed, and I believe it does, resemble the generality of the fops and coxcombs about town. But that let them look to; for, if it affects not me, to what purpose thy random shot?—If indeed thou findest, by the new light darted in upon thee, since thou hast had the honour of conversing with this admirable creature, that the cap fits thy own head, why then, according to the *qui capit* rule, e'en take and clap it on: and I will add a string of bells to it, to complete thee for the fore-horse of the idiot team.

Although I just now said a kind thing or two for this fellow Hickman; yet I can tell thee, I could (to use one of my noble peer's humble phrases) *eat him up without a corn of salt*, when I think of his impudence to salute

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* See Letter III. of this volume. † Ibid. and Letter V.

my charmer *twice* at parting*: And have still less patience with the lady herself for presuming to offer her cheek or lip [thou sayest not which] to him, and to press his clumsy fist between her charming hands. An honour worth a king's ransom; and what I would give—what would I not give? to have!—And then he, in return, to press her, as thou sayest he did, to his stupid heart; at that time, no doubt, more sensible, than ever it was before!

By thy description of their parting, I see thou wilt be a delicate fellow in time. My mortification in this lady's displeasure, will be thy exaltation from her conversation. I envy thee as well for thy opportunities, as for thy improvements: and such an impression has thy concluding paragraph† made upon me, that I wish I do not get into a reformation-humour as well as thou: and then what a couple of lamentable puppies shall we make, howling in recitative to each other's discordant music!

Let me improve upon the thought, and imagine that, turned hermits, we have opened the two old caves at Hornsey, or dug new ones; and in each of our cells set up a death's head, and an hour-glass, for objects of contemplation—I have seen such a picture: but then, Jack, had not the old penitent fornicator a suffocating long grey beard? What figures would a couple of brocaded or laced-waistcoated toupets make with their sour screw'd up half-cock'd faces, and more than half shut eyes, in a kneeling attitude, recapitulating their respective rogueries? This scheme, were we only to make trial of it, and return afterwards to our old ways, might serve to better purpose by far, than Horner's in the Country Wife, to bring the pretty wenches to us.

* See Letter V. of this volume. † Ibid.

Let me see; the author of Hudibras has somewhere a description that would suit us, when met in one of our caves, and comparing our dismal notes together. This is it. Suppose *me* described—

> — He sat upon his rump,
> His head like one in doleful dump:
> Betwixt his knees his hands apply'd
> Unto his cheeks, on either side:
> And by him, in another hole,
> Sat stupid *Belford*, cheek by jowl.

I know thou wilt think me too ludicrous. I think myself so. It is truly, to be ingenuous, a forced put: for my passions are so wound up, that I am obliged either to laugh or cry. Like honest drunken Jack Daventry, [poor fellow!—What an unhappy end was his!]—thou knowest, I used to observe, that whenever he rose from an entertainment, which he never did sober, it was his way, as soon as he got to the door, to look round him like a carrier pigeon just thrown up, in order to spy out his course; and then, taking to his heels, he would run all the way home, though it were a mile or two, when he could hardly stand, and must have tumbled on his nose if he had attempted to walk moderately. This then be my excuse, in this my unconverted estate, for a conclusion so unworthy of the conclusion to thy third letter.

What a length have I run!—Thou wilt own, that if I pay thee not in quality, I do in quantity: and yet I leave a multitude of things unobserved upon. Indeed I hardly at this present know what to do with myself but scribble. Tired with Lord M. who, in his recovery, has played upon me the fable of the nurse, the crying child, and the wolf —tired with my cousins Montague, though charming girls,

were they not so near of kin—tired with Mowbray and Tourville, and their everlasting identity—tired with the country—tired of myself—longing for what I have not—I must go to town ; and there have an interview with the charmer of my soul : for desperate diseases must have desperate remedies ; and I only wait to know my doom from Miss Howe! and then, if it be rejection, I will try my fate, and receive my sentence at her feet.—But I will apprize thee of it beforehand, as I told thee, that thou mayest keep thy parole with the lady in the best manner thou canst.

LETTER XI.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's of July* 27, *see Letters* VII. VIII. *of this volume.*]

Friday Night, July 28.

I WILL now, my dearest friend, write to you all my mind, without reserve, on your resolution not to have this vilest of men. You gave me, in your's of Sunday the 23d, reasons so worthy of the pure mind of my Clarissa, in support of this your resolution, that nothing but self-love, lest I should lose my ever-amiable friend, could have prevailed upon me to wish you to alter it.

Indeed, I thought it was impossible there could be (however desirable) so noble an instance given by any of our sex, of a passion conquered, when there were so many inducements to give way to it. And, therefore, I was wil-

ling to urge you once more to overcome your just indignation, and to be prevailed upon by the solicitations of *his* friends, before you carried your resentments to so great a height, that it would be more difficult for you, and ess to your honour to comply, than if you had complied at first.

But now, my dear, that I see you fixed in your noble resolution; and that it is impossible for your pure mind to join itself with that of so perjured a miscreant; I congratulate you most heartily upon it; and beg your pardon for but seeming to doubt that *theory* and *practice* were not the same thing with my beloved Clarissa.

I have only one thing that saddens my heart on this occasion; and that is, the bad state of health Mr. Hickman (unwillingly) owns you are in. Hitherto you have well observed the doctrine you always laid down to me, That a censured person should first seek to be justified to *herself*, and give but a *second* place to the world's opinion of her; and, in all cases where the two could not be reconciled, have preferred the *first* to the *last;* and are, of consequence, well justified to your own heart, as well as to your Anna Howe. Let me therefore beseech you to endeavour, by all possible means, to recover your health and spirits: and this, as what, if it *can* be effected, will crown the work, and show the world, that you were *indeed* got above the base wretch; and, though put out of your course for a little while, could resume it again, and go on blessing all within your knowledge, as well by your example as by your precepts.

For Heaven's sake, then, for the world's sake, for the honour of our sex, and for *my* sake, once more I beseech you, try to overcome this shock: and, if you *can* overcome it, I shall then be as happy as I wish to be; for

cannot, indeed I cannot, think of parting with you, for many, many years to come.

The reasons you give for discouraging my wishes to have you near us are so convincing, that I ought at present to acquiesce in them: but, my dear, when your mind is fully settled, as, (now you are so absolutely determined in it, with regard to this wretch,) I hope it will soon be, I shall expect you with us, or near us: and then you shall chalk out every path that I will set my foot in; nor will I turn aside either to the right hand or to the left.

You wish I had not mediated for you to your friends. I wish so too; because my mediation was ineffectual; because it may give new ground for the malice of some of them to work upon; and because you are angry with me for doing so. But how, as I said in my former, could I sit down in quiet, when I knew how uneasy their implacableness made you?—But I will tear myself from the subject; for I see I shall be warm again—and displease you—and there is not one thing in the world that I would do, however agreeable to myself, if I thought it would disoblige you; nor any one that I would omit to do, if I knew it would give you pleasure. And indeed, my dear half-severe friend, I will try if I cannot avoid the *fault* as willingly as I would the *rebuke*.

For this reason, I forbear saying any thing on so nice a subject as your letter to your sister. It *must* be right, because you think it so—and if it be taken as it ought, that will show you that it *is*. But if it beget insults and revilings, as it is but too likely, I find you don't intend to let me know it.

You were always so ready to accuse *yourself* for *other people's faults*, and to suspect your own conduct rather than the judgment of your relations, that I have often told

you I cannot imitate you in this. It is not a necessary point of belief with me, that all people in *years* are *therefore* wise; or that all *young people* are *therefore* rash and headstrong: it may be *generally* the case, as far as I know: and possibly it may be so in the case of *my* mother and *her* girl: but I will venture to say that it has not yet appeared to be so between the principals of Harlowe-place and their second daughter.

You are for excusing them beforehand for their expected cruelty, as not knowing what you have suffered, nor how ill you are: they have *heard* of the former, and are not sorry for it: of the latter they have been *told*, and *I* have most reason to know how they have taken it—but I shall be far from avoiding the *fault*, and as surely shall incur the *rebuke*, if I say any more upon this subject. I will therefore only add at present, That your reasonings in their behalf show *you* to be all excellence; their returns to you that *they* are all——Do, my dear, let me end with a little bit of spiteful justice—but you won't, I know—so I have done, quite done, however reluctantly: yet if you think of the word I would have said, don't doubt the justice of it, and fill up the blank with it.

You intimate that were I actually married, and Mr. Hickman to *desire* it, you would think of obliging me with a visit on the occasion; and that, perhaps, when with me, it would be difficult for you to remove far from me.

Lord, my dear, what a stress do you seem to lay upon Mr. Hickman's *desiring* it!—To be sure he does and would of all things desire to have you *near* us, and *with* us, if we might be so favoured—policy, as well as veneration for *you*, would undoubtedly make the man, if not a fool, *desire* this. But let me tell you, that if Mr. Hick-

man, after marriage, should pretend to dispute with me my friendships, as I hope I am not quite a fool, I should let him know how far his own quiet was concerned in such an impertinence; especially if they were such friendships as were contracted before I knew him.

I know I always differed from you on this subject: for you think more highly of a *husband*'s prerogative than most people do of the *royal* one. These notions, my dear, from a person of your sense and judgment, are no way advantageous to us; inasmuch as they justify that assuming sex in their insolence; when hardly one out of ten of them, their opportunities considered, deserves any prerogative at all. Look through all the families we know; and we shall not find one-third of them have half the sense of their wives. And yet these are to be vested with prerogatives! And a woman of twice their sense has nothing to do but hear, tremble, and obey—and for *conscience*-sake too, I warrant!

But Mr. Hickman and I may perhaps have a little discourse upon these sort of subjects, before I suffer him to talk of the day: and then I shall let him know what he has to trust to; as he will me, if he be a sincere man, what he pretends to expect from me. But let me tell you, my dear, that it is more in *your* power than, perhaps, you think it, to hasten the day so much pressed for by my mother, as well as wished for by you—for the very day that you can assure me that you are in a tolerable state of health, and have discharged your doctor and apothecary, at their own motions, on that account—some day in a month from that desirable news shall be it. So, my dear, make haste and be well, and then this matter will be brought to effect in a manner more agreeable to your Anna Howe than it otherwise ever can.

I sent this day, by a particular hand, to the Misses Montague, your letter of just reprobation of the greatest profligate in the kingdom; and hope I shall not have done amiss that I transcribe some of the paragraphs of your letter of the 23d, and send them with it, as you at first intended should be done.

You are, it seems, (and that too much for your health,) employed in writing. I hope it is in penning down the particulars of your tragical story. And my mother has put me in mind to press you to it, with a view that one day, if it might be published under feigned names, it would be of as much use as honour to the sex. My mother says she cannot help admiring you for the propriety of your resentment in your refusal of the wretch; and she would be extremely glad to have her advice of penning your sad story complied with. And then, she says, your noble conduct throughout your trials and calamities will afford not only a shining example to your sex, but at the same time, (those calamities befalling SUCH a person,) a fearful warning to the inconsiderate young creatures of it.

On Monday we shall set out on our journey; and I hope to be back in a fortnight, and on my return will have one pull more with my mother for a London journey: and, if the *pretence must* be the buying of clothes, the *principal motive* will be that of seeing once more my dear friend, *while* I can say I have not finally given consent to the change of a visiter into a relation, and so can call myself MY OWN, as well as

Your

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XII.

MISS HOWE, TO THE TWO MISSES MONTAGUE.

DEAR LADIES, Sat. July 29.

I HAVE not been wanting to use all my interest with my beloved friend, to induce her to forgive and be reconciled to your kinsman, (though he has so ill deserved it;) and have even *repeated* my earnest advice to her on this head. This repetition, and the waiting for her answer, having taken up time, have been the cause that I could not sooner do myself the honour of writing to you on this subject.

You will see, by the enclosed, her immovable resolution, grounded on noble and high-souled motives, which I cannot but *regret* and *applaud* at the same time: *applaud*, for the justice of her determination, which will confirm all your worthy house in the opinion you had conceived of her unequalled merit; and *regret*, because I have but too much reason to apprehend, as well by that, as by the report of a gentleman just come from her, that she is in such a declining way, as to her health, that her thoughts are very differently employed than on a continuance here.

The enclosed letter she thought fit to send to me unsealed, that, after I had perused it, I might forward it to you: and this is the reason it is superscribed by myself, and sealed with my seal. It is very full and peremptory; but as she had been pleased, in a letter to me, dated the 23d instant, (as soon as she could hold a pen,) to give me more ample reasons why she could not comply with your pressing requests, as well as mine, I will transcribe some

of the passages in that letter, which will give one of the wickedest men in the world, (if he sees them,) reason to think himself one of the most unhappy, in the loss of so incomparable a wife as he might have gloried in, had he not been so *superlatively* wicked. These are the passages.

[*See, for these passages, Miss Harlowe's letter, No. XCI. of Vol. VI. dated July 23, marked with a turned comma, thus* ']

And now, Ladies, you have before you my beloved friend's reasons for her refusal of a man unworthy of the relation he bears to so many excellent persons: and I will add, [for I cannot help it,] that the merit and rank of the person considered, and the vile manner of his proceedings, there never was a greater villany committed: and since she thinks her first and *only* fault cannot be expiated but by death, I pray to God *daily*, and will *hourly* from the moment I shall hear of that sad catastrophe, that He will be pleased to make him the subject of His vengeance, in some such way, as that all who know of his perfidious crime, may see the hand of Heaven in the punishment of it!

You will forgive me, Ladies: I love not mine own soul better than I do Miss Clarissa Harlowe. And the distresses she has gone through; the persecution she suffers from all her friends; the curse she lies under, for his sake, from her implacable father; her reduced health and circumstances, from high health and affluence; and that execrable arrest and confinement, which have deepened all her other calamities, [and which must be laid at his door, as it was the act of his vile agents, that, whether

from his immediate orders or not, naturally flowed from his preceding baseness;] the sex dishonoured in the eye of the world, in the person of one of the greatest ornaments of it; the unmanly methods, whatever they were, [for I know not all as yet,] by which he compassed her ruin; all these considerations join to justify my warmth, and my execrations of a man whom I think excluded by his crimes from the benefit even of christian forgiveness—and were you to see all she writes, and to know the admirable talents she is mistress of, you yourselves would join with me to admire her, and execrate him.

Believe me to be, with a high sense of your merits,

Dear Ladies,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XIII.

MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MY DEAREST YOUNG LADY, Friday, July 28.

I HAVE the consolation to tell you that my son is once again in a hopeful way, as to his health. He desires his duty to you. He is very low and weak. And so am I. But this is the first time that I have been able, for several days past, to sit up to write, or I would not have been so long silent.

Your letter to your sister is received and answered. You have the answer by this time, I suppose. I wish it may be to your satisfaction: but am afraid it will not: for, by Betty Barnes, I find they were in a great ferment

on receiving your's, and much divided whether it should be answered or not. They will not yet believe that you are so ill, as [to my infinite concern] I find you are. What passed between Miss Harlowe and Miss Howe has been, as I feared it would be, an aggravation.

I showed Betty two or three passages in your letter to me; and she seemed moved, and said, She would report them favourably, and would procure me a visit from Miss Harlowe, if I would promise to show the same to *her*. But I have heard no more of that.

Methinks, I am sorry you refuse the wicked man: but doubt not, nevertheless, that your motives for doing so are more commendable than my wishes that you would not. But as you would be resolved, as I may say, on life, if you gave way to such a thought; and as I have so much interest in your recovery; I cannot forbear showing this regard to myself; and to ask you, If you cannot get over your just resentments?—But I dare say no more on this subject.

What a dreadful thing indeed was it for my dearest tender young lady to be arrested in the streets of London! —How does my heart go over again for you, what your's must have suffered at that time!—Yet this, to such a mind as your's, must be light, compared to what you had suffered before.

O my dearest Miss Clary, how shall we know what to pray for, when we pray, but that *God's will may be done*, and that we may be *resigned to it!*—When at nine years old, and afterwards at eleven, you had a dangerous fever, how incessantly did we grieve, and pray, and put up our vows to the Throne of Grace, for your recovery!—For all our lives were bound up in your life—yet *now*, my dear, as

it has proved, [especially if we are *soon* to lose you,] what a much more desirable event, both for you and for us, would it have been, had we *then* lost you!

A sad thing to say! But as it is in pure love to you that I say it, and in full conviction that we are not always fit to be our own choosers, I hope it may be excusable; and the rather, as the same reflection will naturally lead both you and me to acquiesce under the present dispensation; since we are assured that nothing happens by chance; and that the greatest good may, for ought we know, be produced from the heaviest evils.

I am glad you are with such honest people; and that you have all your effects restored. How dreadfully have you been used, that one should be glad of such a poor piece of justice as that!

Your talent at moving the passions is always hinted at; and this Betty of your sister's never comes near me that she is not full of it. But, as you say, whom has it moved, that you wished to move? Yet, were it not for this unhappy notion, I am sure your mother would relent. Forgive me, my dear Miss Clary; for I must try one way to be convinced if my opinion be not just. But I will not tell you what that is, unless it succeeds. I will try, in pure duty and love to *them*, as to *you*.

May Heaven be your support in all your trials, is the constant prayer, my dearest young lady, of

Your ever affectionate friend and servant,

JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER XIV.

MRS. NORTON, TO MRS. HARLOWE.

HONOURED MADAM, Friday, July 28.

BEING forbidden (without leave) to send you any thing I might happen to receive from my beloved Miss Clary, and so ill, that I cannot attend to *ask* your leave, I give you this trouble, to let you know that I have received a letter from her; which, I think, I should hereafter be held inexcusable, as things may happen, if I did not desire permission to communicate to you, and that as soon as possible.

Applications have been made to the dear young lady from Lord M., from the two ladies his sisters, and from both his nieces, and from the wicked man himself, to forgive and marry him. This, in noble indignation for the usage she has received from him, she has absolutely refused. And perhaps, Madam, if you and the honoured family should be of opinion that to comply with their wishes is *now* the properest measure that *can* be taken, the circumstances of things may require your authority or advice, to induce her to change her mind.

I have reason to believe that one motive for her refusal is her full conviction that she shall not long be a trouble to any body; and so she would not give a husband a right to interfere with her family, in relation to the estate her grandfather devised to her. But of this, however, I have not the least intimation from her. Nor would she, I dare say, mention it *as* a reason, having still stronger reasons, from his vile treatment of her, to refuse him.

The letter I have received will show how truly penitent

the dear creature is; and, if I have your permission, I will send it sealed up, with a copy of mine, to which it is an answer. But as I resolve upon this step without her knowledge, [and indeed I do,] I will not acquaint her with it, unless it be attended with desirable effects: because, otherwise, besides making me incur her displeasure, it might quite break her already half-broken heart. I am,

Honoured Madam,
Your dutiful and ever-obliged servant,
JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER XV.

MRS. HARLOWE, TO MRS. JUDITH NORTON.

Sunday, July 30.

We all know your virtuous prudence, worthy woman: we all do. But your partiality to this your rash favourite is likewise known. And we are no less acquainted with the unhappy body's power of painting her distresses so as to pierce a stone.

Every one is of opinion that the dear naughty creature is working about to be forgiven and received: and for this reason it is that Betty has been forbidden, [not by *me*, you may be assured!] to mention any more of her letters; for she did speak to my Bella of some moving passages you read to her.

This will convince you that nothing will be heard in her favour. To what purpose then should I mention any thing about her?—But you may be sure that I *will*, if I can

have but one second. However, that is not at all likely, until we see what the *consequences* of her crime will be: And who can tell that?—She may—How can I speak it, and my once darling daughter unmarried?—She may be with child!—This would perpetuate her stain. Her brother may come to some harm; which God forbid!—One child's ruin, I hope, will not be followed by another's murder!

As to her grief, and her present misery, whatever it be, she must bear with it; and it must be short of what I hourly bear for her! Indeed I am afraid nothing but her being at the last extremity of all will make her father, and her uncles, and her other friends, forgive her.

The easy pardon perverse children meet with, when they have done the rashest and most rebellious thing they can do, is the reason *(as is pleaded to us every day)* that so *many* follow their example. They depend upon the indulgent weakness of their parents' tempers, and, in *that* dependence, harden their own hearts: and a little humiliation, when they have brought themselves into the foretold misery, is to be a sufficient atonement for the greatest perverseness.

But for such a child as this [*I mention what others hourly say, but what I must sorrowfully subscribe to*] to lay plots and stratagems to deceive her parents as well as herself! and to run away with a libertine! Can there be any atonement for her crime? And is she not answerable to God, to us, to you, and to all the world who knew her, for the abuse of such talents as *she* has abused?

You say her heart is half-broken: Is it to be wondered at? Was not her sin committed equally against warning and the light of her own knowledge?

That *he* would now marry her, or that *she* would re-

fuse him, if she believed him in earnest, as she has circumstanced herself, is not at all probable; and were *I* inclined to believe it, *nobody else* here would. He values not his relations; and would deceive them as soon as any others: his aversion to marriage he has always openly declared; and still occasionally declares it. But, if he be now in earnest, which every one who knows him must doubt, which do you think (hating us too as he professes to hate and despise us all) would be most eligible here, To hear of her death, or of her marriage with such a vile man?

To all of us, yet, I cannot say! For, O my good Mrs. Norton, you know what a mother's tenderness for the child of her heart would make her choose, notwithstanding all that child's faults, rather than lose her for ever!

But I must sail with the tide; my own judgment also joining with the general resentment; or I should make the unhappiness of the more worthy still greater, [my dear Mr. Harlowe's particularly;] which is already more than enough to make them unhappy for the remainder of their days. This I know; if I were to oppose the rest, our son would fly out to find this libertine; and who could tell what would be the issue of *that* with such a man of violence and blood as that Lovelace is known to be?

All I can expect to prevail for her is, that in a week, or so, Mr. Brand may be sent up to inquire privately about her present state and way of life, and to see she is not altogether destitute: for nothing she writes herself will be regarded.

Her father indeed has, at her earnest request, withdrawn the curse, which, in a passion, he laid upon her, at her first wicked flight from us. But Miss Howe, [*it is a sad thing, Mrs. Norton, to suffer so many ways at once,*] had made matters so difficult by her undue li-

berties with us all, as well by speech in all companies, as by letters written to my Bella, that we could hardly prevail upon him to hear her letter read.

These liberties of Miss Howe with us; the general cry against us abroad wherever we are spoken of; and the *visible*, and not seldom *audible*, disrespectfulness, which high and low treat us with to our faces, as we go to and from church, and even *at* church, (for no where else have we the heart to go,) as if none of us had been regarded but upon her account; and as if she were innocent, we all in fault; are constant aggravations, you must needs think, to the whole family.

She has made my lot heavy, I am sure, that was far from being light before!—To tell you truth, I am enjoined not to receive any thing of her's, from any hand, without leave. Should I therefore gratify my yearnings after her, so far as to receive privately the letter you mention, what would the case be, but to torment myself, without being able to do her good?—And were it to be known—Mr. Harlowe is *so* passionate—And should it throw his gout into his stomach, as her rash flight did—Indeed, indeed, I am very unhappy!—For, O my good woman, she is my child still!—But unless it were more in my power—Yet do I long to see the letter—you say it tells of her present way and circumstances. The poor child, who ought to be in possession of thousands!—And *will!*—For her father will be a faithful steward for her.—But it must be in his own way, and at his own time.

And is she *really* ill?—so *very* ill?—But she *ought* to sorrow—she has given a double measure of it.

But does she *really* believe she shall not *long* trouble us?—But, O my Norton!—She must, she *will*, long trouble us—For can she think her death, if we should be

deprived of her, will put an end to our afflictions?—Can it be thought that the fall of such a child will not be regretted by us to the last hour of our lives?

But, in the letter you have, does she, without *reserve*, express her contrition? Has she in it no reflecting hints? Does she not aim at extenuations?—If I *were* to see it, will it not shock me so much, that my *apparent* grief may expose me to harshnesses?—Can it be contrived—

But to what purpose?—Don't send it—I charge you don't—I dare not see it—

Yet—

But alas!—

Oh! forgive the almost distracted mother! You *can*. —You know how to allow for all this—so I will let it go. —I will not write over again this part of my letter.

But I choose not to know more of her than is communicated to us all—no more than I dare *own* I have seen—and what some of them may rather communicate *to* me, than receive *from* me: and this for the sake of my outward quiet: although my inward peace suffers more and more by the compelled reserve.

I was forced to break off. But I will now try to conclude my long letter.

I am sorry you are ill. But if you were well, I could not, for your own sake, wish you to go up, as Betty tells us you long to do. If you *went*, nothing would be minded that came from you. As they already think you too partial in her favour, your going up would confirm it, and do yourself prejudice, and her no good. And as every body values you here, I advise you not to interest yourself too warmly in her favour, especially before my Bella's Betty, till I can let you know a *proper* time. Yet to forbid you

to love the dear naughty creature, who can? O my Norton! you *must* love her!—And so must I!

I send you five guineas, to help you in your present illness, and your son's; for it must have lain heavy upon you. What a sad, sad thing, my dear good woman, that all *your* pains, and all *my* pains, for eighteen or nineteen years together, have, in so few months, been rendered thus deplorably vain! Yet I must be always your friend, and pity you, for the very reason that I myself deserve every one's pity.

Perhaps I may find an opportunity to pay you a visit, as in your illness; and then may weep over the letter you mention with you. But, for the future, write nothing to me about the poor girl that you think may not be communicated to us all.

And I charge you, as you value my friendship, as you wish my peace, not to say any thing of a letter you have from me, either to the naughty one, or to any body else. It was some little relief (the occasion given) to write to you, who must, in so particular a manner, share my affliction. A mother, Mrs. Norton, cannot forget her child, though that child could abandon her mother; and, in so doing, run away with all her mother's comforts!—As I can truly say is the case of

Your unhappy friend,

CHARLOTTE HARLOWE.

LETTER XVI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MRS. JUDITH NORTON.

Sat. July 29.

I CONGRATULATE you, my dear Mrs. Norton, with all my heart, on your son's recovery; which I pray to God, with your own health, to perfect.

I write in some hurry, being apprehensive of the consequence of the hints you give of some method you propose to try in my favour [with my relations, I presume, you mean]: but you will not tell me what, you say, if it prove unsuccessful.

Now I must beg of you that you will not take any step in my favour, with which you do not first acquaint me.

I have but one request to make to them, besides what is contained in my letter to my sister; and I would not, methinks, for the sake of their own future peace of mind, that they should be teased so by your well-meant kindness, and that of Miss Howe, as to be put upon denying me that. And why should more be asked for me than I can partake of? More than is absolutely necessary for my own peace?

You suppose I should have my sister's answer to my letter by the time your's reached my hand. I have it: and a severe one, a very severe one, it is. Yet, considering my fault in their eyes, and the provocations I am to suppose they so newly had from my dear Miss Howe, I am to look upon it as a favour that it was answered at all. I will send you a copy of it soon; as also of mine, to to which it is an answer.

I have reason to be very thankful that my father has withdrawn that heavy malediction, which affected me so much—A parent's curse, my dear Mrs. Norton! What child could die in peace under a parent's curse? so literally fulfilled too as this has has been in what relates to this life!

My heart is too full to touch upon the particulars of my sister's letter. I can make but *one* atonement for my fault. May *that* be accepted! And may it soon be forgotten, by *every* dear relation, that there was such an unhappy daughter, sister, or niece, as Clarissa Harlowe!

My cousin Morden was one of those who was so earnest in prayer for my recovery, at nine and eleven years of age, as you mention. My sister thinks he will be one of those who will wish I never had had a being. But pray, when he does come, let me hear of it with the first.

You think that, were it not for that unhappy notion of my moving talent, my mother would relent. What would I give to see her once more, and, although unknown to her, to kiss but the hem of her garment!

Could I have thought that the last time I saw her would *have been the last*, with what difficulty should I have been torn from her embraced feet!—And when, screened behind the yew-hedge on the 5th of April last*, I saw my father, and my uncle Antony, and my brother and sister, how little did I think that that would be the last time I should ever see them; and, in so short a space, that so many dreadful evils would befal me!

But I can write nothing but what must give you trouble. I will therefore, after repeating my desire that you

* See Vol. II. Letter XXXV.

will not intercede for me but with my previous consent, conclude with the assurance, that I am, and ever will be,

Your most affectionate and dutiful
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XVII.

MISS AR. HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's of Friday, July* 21, *Letter* XCV. *of Vol.* VI.]

O MY UNHAPPY LOST SISTER! Thursday, July 27.

WHAT a miserable hand have you made of your romantic and giddy expedition!—I pity you at my heart.

You may *well* grieve and repent!—Lovelace has left you!—In what way or circumstances you know best.

I wish your conduct had made your case more pitiable. But 'tis your own seeking!

God help you!—For you have not a friend will look upon you!—Poor, wicked, undone creature!—Fallen, as you are, against warning, against expostulation, against duty!

But it signifies nothing to reproach you. I weep over you.

My poor mother!—Your rashness and folly have made *her* more miserable than *you* can be.—Yet she has besought my father to grant your request.

My uncles joined with her: for they thought there was

a little more modesty in your letter than in the letters of your pert advocate: and my father is pleased to give me leave to write; but only these words for *him*, and no more: 'That he withdraws the curse he laid upon you, 'at the first hearing of your wicked flight, so far as it is 'in his power to do it; and hopes that your present pu-'nishment may be all that you will meet with. For the 'rest, he will never own you, nor forgive you; and 'grieves he has such a daughter in the world.'

All this, and more you have deserved from him, and from all of *us:* But what have you done to this abandoned libertine, to deserve what you have met with at *his* hands? —I fear, I fear, Sister!—But no more!—A blessed four months' work have you made of it.

My brother is now at Edinburgh, sent thither by my father, [though he knows not this to be the motive,] that he may not meet your triumphant deluder.

We are told he would be glad to marry you: But why, then, did he abandon you? He had kept you till he was tired of you, no question; and it is not likely he would wish to have you but upon the terms you have already without all doubt been *his*.

You ought to advise your friend Miss Howe to concern herself less in your matters than she does, except she could do it with more decency. She has written three letters to me: very insolent ones. Your favourer, poor Mrs. Norton, thinks you know nothing of the pert crea-ture's writing. I hope you don't. But then the more impertinent the writer. But, believing the fond woman, I sat down the more readily to answer your letter; and I write with less severity, I can tell you, than otherwise I should have done, if I had answered it at all.

Monday last was your birth-day. Think, poor un-

grateful wretch, as you are! how we all used to keep it; and you will not wonder to be told, that we ran away from one another that day. But God give you true penitence, if you have it not already! and it *will* be true, if it be equal to the shame and the sorrow you have given us all.

Your afflicted sister,

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

Your cousin Morden is every day expected in England. He, as well as others of the family, when he comes to hear what a blessed piece of work you have made of it, will wish you never had had a being.

LETTER XVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

Sunday, July 30.

You have given me great pleasure, my dearest friend, by your approbation of my reasonings, and of my resolution founded upon them, never to have Mr. Lovelace. This approbation is so *right* a thing, give me leave to say, from the nature of the case, and from the strict honour and true dignity of mind, which I always admired in my Anna Howe, that I could hardly tell to what, but to my evil destiny, which of late would not let me please any body, to attribute the advice you gave me to the contrary.

But let not the ill state of my health, and what that may naturally tend to, sadden you. I have told you, that I will not run away from life, nor avoid the means that may

continue it, if God see fit: and if He do *not*, who shall repine at his will!

If it shall be found that I have not acted unworthy of your love, and of my own character, in my greater trials, that will be a happiness to both on reflection.

The shock which you so earnestly advise me to try to get above, was a shock, the greatest that I could receive. But, my dear, as it was not occasioned by my *fault*, I hope I am already got above it. I hope I am.

I am more grieved (at times however) for *others*, than for *myself*. And so I *ought*. For as to *myself*, I cannot but reflect that I have had an escape, rather than a loss, in missing Mr. Lovelace for a husband—even had he *not* committed the vilest of all outrages.

Let any one, who knows my story, collect his character from his behaviour to *me before* that outrage; and then judge whether it was in the least probable that such a man should make me happy. But to collect his character from his principles with regard to the *sex in general*, and from his enterprizes upon many of them, and to consider the *cruelty of his nature*, and the *sportiveness of his invention*, together with the *high opinion he has of himself*, it will not be doubted that a wife of his must have been miserable; and more miserable if she loved him, than she could have been were she to be indifferent to him.

A *twelvemonth* might very probably have put a period to my life; situated as I was with my friends; persecuted and harassed as I had been by my brother and sister; and my very heart torn in pieces by the *wilful*, and (as it is now apparent) *premeditated* suspenses of the man, whose gratitude I wished to engage, and whose protection

I was the more entitled to expect, as he had robbed me of every other, and reduced me to an absolute dependence upon himself. Indeed I once thought that it was *all* his view to bring me to this, (as he hated my family;) and uncomfortable enough for me, if it had been all.

Can it be thought, my dear, that my heart was not more than half broken (happy as I was before I knew Mr. Lovelace) by such a grievous change in my circumstances? —Indeed it was. Nor perhaps was the wicked violence *wanting* to have cut short, though possibly not so *very* short, a life that he has sported with.

Had I been his but a *month*, he must have possessed the estate on which my relations had set their hearts; the more to their regret, as they hated *him* as much as he hated *them*.

Have I not reason, these things considered, to think myself happier without Mr. Lovelace than I could have been with him?—My *will too unviolated;* and very little, nay, not any thing as to him, to reproach myself with?

But with my *relations* it is *otherwise*. They indeed deserve to be pitied. They are, and no doubt will long be, unhappy.

To judge of their resentments, and of their conduct, we must put ourselves in their situation:—and while *they* think me more in fault than themselves, (whether my favourers are of their opinion, or not,) and have a right to judge for themselves, they ought to have great allowances made for them; my parents especially. They stand at least *self*-acquitted, (that I cannot;) and the rather, as they can recollect, to their pain, their past indulgencies to me, and their unquestionable love.

Your partiality for the friend you so much value will

not easily let you come into this way of thinking. But only, my dear, be pleased to consider the matter in the following light.

'Here was my MOTHER, one of the most prudent per-
'sons of her sex, married into a family, not perhaps so
'happily tempered as herself; but every one of which she
'had the address, for a great while, absolutely to govern
'as she pleased by her directing wisdom, at the same time
'that they knew not but her prescriptions were the dic-
'tates of their own hearts; such a sweet heart had she of
'conquering by seeming to yield. Think, my dear, what
'must be the pride and the pleasure of such a mother, that
'in my brother she could give a *son* to the family she dis-
'tinguished with her love, not unworthy of their wishes;
'a *daughter*, in my *sister*, of whom she had no reason to
'be ashamed; and in *me* a *second* daughter, whom every
'body complimented (such was their partial favour to me)
'as being the still more immediate likeness of herself?
'How, self pleased, could she smile round upon a family
'she had so blessed! What compliments were paid her
'upon the example she had given us, which was followed
'with such hopeful effects! With what a noble confidence
'could she look upon her dear Mr. Harlowe, as a person
'made happy by her; and be delighted to think that no-
'thing but purity streamed from a fountain so pure!

'Now, my dear, reverse, as I daily do, this charm-
'ing prospect. See my dear *mother*, sorrowing in her
'closet; endeavouring to suppress her sorrow at her
'table, and in those retirements where sorrow was before
'a stranger: hanging down her pensive head: smiles no
'more beaming over her benign aspect: her virtue made
'to suffer for faults she could not be guilty of: her pati-

'ence continually tried (because she has more of it than 'any other) with repetitions of faults she is as much 'wounded by, as those can be from whom she so often 'hears of them: taking to herself, as the fountain-head, a 'taint which only had infected one of the under-currents: 'afraid to open her lips (were she willing) in my favour, 'lest it should be thought she has any bias in her own 'mind to failings that never could have been suspected in 'her: robbed of that pleasing merit, which the mother 'of well-nurtured and hopeful children may glory in: 'every one who visits her, or is visited by her, by dumb 'show, and looks that mean more than words can express, 'condoling where they used to congratulate: the affected 'silence wounding: the compassionating look reminding: 'the half-suppressed sigh in *them*, calling up deeper sighs 'from *her*; and their averted eyes, while they endeavour 'to restrain the rising tear, provoking tears from *her*, 'that will not be restrained.

'When I consider these things, and, added to these, 'the pangs that tear in pieces the stronger heart of my 'FATHER, because it cannot relieve itself by those tears 'which carry the torturing grief to the eyes of softer spi-'rits: the overboiling tumults of my impatient and un-'controulable BROTHER, piqued to the heart of his honour, 'in the fall of a sister, in whom he once gloried: the 'pride of an ELDER SISTER, who had given unwilling way 'to the honours paid over her head to one born after her: 'and, lastly, the dishonour I have brought upon two UN-'CLES, who each contended which should most favour 'their then happy niece:—When, I say, I reflect upon 'my fault in these strong, yet just lights, what room can 'there be to censure any body but my unhappy self?

'and how much reason have I to say, *If I justify myself, mine own heart shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse?*'

Here permit me to lay down my pen for a few moments.

You are very obliging to me, *intentionally*, I know, when you tell me, it is in my power to hasten the day of Mr. Hickman's happiness. But yet, give me leave to say, that I admire this kind assurance less than any other paragraph of your letter.

In the first place you know it is *not* in my power to say *when* I can dismiss my physician; and you should not put the celebration of a marriage *intended* by *yourself*, and so *desirable* to your *mother*, upon so precarious an issue. Nor will I accept of a compliment, which must mean a slight to *her*.

If any thing could give me a relish for life, after what I have suffered, it would be the hopes of the continuance of the more than sisterly love, which has, for years, uninterruptedly bound us together as one mind.—And why, my dear, should you defer giving (by a tie still stronger) another friend to one who has so few?

I am glad you have sent my letter to Miss Montague. I hope I shall hear no more of this unhappy man.

I had begun the particulars of my tragical story: but it is so painful a task, and I have so many more important things to do, and, as I apprehend, so little time to do them in, that, could I avoid it, I would go no farther in it.

Then, to this hour, I know not by what means several of his machinations to ruin me were brought about; so that some material parts of my sad story must be defective, if I were to sit down to write it. But I have been thinking

of a way that will answer the end wished for by your mother and you full as well, perhaps better.

Mr. Lovelace, it seems, has communicated to his friend Mr. Belford all that has passed between himself and me, as he went on. Mr. Belford has not been able to deny it. So that (as we may observe by the way) a poor young creature, whose indiscretion has given a libertine power over her, has a reason *she little thinks of*, to regret her folly; since these wretches, who have no more honour in one point than in another, scruple not to make her weakness a part of their triumph to their brother libertines.

I have nothing to apprehend of this sort, if I have the the justice done me in his letters which Mr. Belford assures me I have: and therefore the particulars of my story, and the base arts of this vile man, will, I think, be best collected from those very letters of his, (if Mr. Belford can be prevailed upon to communicate them;) to which I dare appeal with the same truth and fervour as he did, who says—*O that one would hear me! and that mine adversary had written a book!—Surely, I would take it upon my shoulders, and bind it to me as a crown! for I covered not my trangressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.*

There is one way which may be fallen upon to induce Mr. Belford to communicate these letters; since he seems to have (and declares he always had) a sincere abhorrence of his friend's baseness to me: but that, you'll say, when you hear it, is a strange one. Nevertheless, I am very earnest upon it at present.

It is no other than this:

I think to make Mr. Belford the executor of my last will: [don't be surprised:] and with this view I permit his visits with the less scruple: and every time I see him,

from his concern for me, am more and more inclined to do so. If I hold in the same mind, and if he accept the trust, and will communicate the materials in his power, those, joined with what you can furnish, will answer the whole end.

I know you will start at my notion of such an executor: but pray, my dear, consider, in my present circumstances, what I can do better, as I am empowered to make a will, and have considerable matters in my own disposal.

Your mother, I am sure, would not consent that *you* should take this office upon you. It might subject *Mr. Hickman* to the insults of that violent man. *Mrs. Norton* cannot, for several reasons respecting herself. My *brother* looks upon what I ought to have as his right. My *uncle Harlowe* is already one of my trustees (as my cousin Morden is the other) for the estate my grandfather left me: but you see I could not get from my own family the few guineas I left behind me at Harlowe-place; and my *uncle Antony* once threatened to have my grandfather's will controverted. My *father!*—To be sure, my dear, I could not expect that my *father* would do all I wish should be done: and a *will* to be executed by a father for a daughter, (parts of it, perhaps, absolutely against his own judgment,) carries somewhat daring and prescriptive in the very *word.*

If indeed my *cousin Morden* were to come in time, and would undertake this trust—but even *him* it might subject to hazards; and the more, as he is a man of great spirit; and as the other man (of *as* great) looks upon me (unprotected as I have long been) as his property.

Now Mr. Belford, as I have already mentioned, knows every thing that has passed. He is a man of spirit, and, it seems, as fearless as the other, with more humane qualities.

You don't know, my dear, what instances of sincere humanity this Mr. Belford has shown, not only on occasion of the cruel arrest, but on several occasions since. And Mrs. Lovick has taken pains to inquire after his general character; and hears a very good one of him, for justice and generosity in all his concerns of *meum* and *tuum*, as they are called: he has a knowledge of law-matters; and has two executorships upon him at this time, in the discharge of which his honour is unquestioned.

All these reasons have already in a manner *determined* me to ask this favour of him; although it will have an odd sound with it to make an intimate friend of Mr. Lovelace my executor.

This is certain: my brother will be more acquiescent a great deal in such a case with the articles of my will, as he will see that it will be to no purpose to controvert some of them, which else, I dare say, he would controvert, or persuade my other friends to do so. And who would involve an executor in a law-suit, if they could help it?—Which would be the case, if any body were left, whom my brother could hope to awe or controul; since my father has possession of all, and is absolutely governed by him. [Angry spirits, my dear, as I have often seen, will be overcome by more angry ones, as well as sometimes be disarmed by the meek.]—Nor would I *wish*, you may believe, to have effects torn out of my father's hands: while Mr. Belford, who is a man of fortune, (and a good economist in his own affairs,) would have no interest but to do justice.

Then he exceedingly presses for some occasion to show his readiness to serve me: and he would be able to manage his violent friend, over whom he has more influence than any other person.

But after all, I know not if it were not more eligible by far, that my story, *and myself too*, should be forgotten as soon as possible. And of this I shall have the less doubt, if the character of my parents [you will forgive me, my dear] cannot be guarded against the unqualified bitterness which, from your affectionate zeal for me, has sometimes mingled with your ink—a point that *ought*, and (I insist upon it) *must* be well considered of, if any thing be done which your mother and you are desirous to have done. The generality of the world is too apt to oppose a duty—and general duties, my dear, ought not to be weakened by the justification of a single person, however unhappily circumstanced.

My father has been so good as to take off the heavy malediction he laid me under. I must be now solicitous for a last blessing; and that is all I shall presume to petition for. My sister's letter, communicating this grace, is a severe one: but as she writes to me as *from every body*, how could I expect it to be otherwise?

If you set out to-morrow, this letter cannot reach you till you get to your aunt Harman's. I shall therefore direct it thither, as Mr. Hickman instructed me.

I hope you will have met with no inconveniencies in your little journey and voyage; and that you will have found in good health all whom you wish to see well.

If your relations in the little island join their solicitations with your mother's commands, to have your nuptials celebrated before you leave them, let me beg of you, my dear, to oblige them. How grateful will the notification that you have done so be to

Your ever faithful and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XIX.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HARLOWE.

Saturday, July 29.

I REPINE not, my dear Sister, at the severity you have been pleased to express in the letter you favoured me with; because that severity was accompanied with the grace I had petitioned for; and because the reproaches of mine own heart are stronger than any other person's reproaches can be: and yet I am not half so culpable as I am imagined to be: as would be allowed, if all the circumstances of my unhappy story were known: and which I shall be ready to communicate to Mrs. Norton, if she be commissioned to inquire into them; or to you, my Sister, if you can have patience to hear them.

I remembered with a bleeding heart what day the 24th of July was. I began with the eve of it; and I passed the day itself—*as it was fit I should pass it.* Nor have I any comfort to give to my dear and ever-honoured father and mother, and to you, my Bella, but this—that, as it was the first *unhappy* anniversary of my birth, in all probability, it will be the *last.*

Believe me, my dear Sister, I say not this merely to move compassion, but from the *best* grounds. And as, on that account, I think it of the highest importance to my peace of mind to obtain one farther favour, I would choose to owe to your intercession, *as my sister*, the leave I beg, to address half a dozen lines (with the hope of having them answered as I wish) to either or to both my honoured parents, to beg their *last blessing.*

This blessing is all the favour I have now to ask: it is

all I *dare* to ask: yet am I afraid to rush at once, though by *letter*, into the presence of either. And if I did not ask it, it might seem to be owing to stubbornness and want of duty, when my heart is all humility and penitence. Only, be so good as to embolden me to attempt this task—write but this one line, 'Clary Harlowe, you are at li-'berty to write as you desire.' This will be enough—and shall, to my last hour, be acknowledged as the greatest favour, by

Your truly penitent sister,
CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XX.

MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MY DEAREST YOUNG LADY, Monday, July 31.

I MUST indeed own that I took the liberty to write to your mother, offering to enclose to her, if she gave me leave, your's of the 24th: by which I thought she would see what was the state of your mind; what the nature of your last troubles was from the wicked arrest; what the people are where you lodge; what proposals were made you from Lord M.'s family; also your sincere penitence; and how much Miss Howe's writing to them, in the terms she wrote in, disturbed you—but, as you have taken the matter into your own hands, and forbid me, in your last, to act in this nice affair unknown to you, I am glad the letter was *not required of me*—and indeed it may be better that the matter lie wholly between you and them; since my affection for you is thought to proceed from partiality.

They would choose, no doubt, that you should owe to *themselves*, and not to my humble mediation, the favour for which you so earnestly sue, and of which I would not have you despair: for I will venture to assure you, that your mother is ready to take the first opportunity to show her maternal tenderness: and this I gather from several hints I am not at liberty to explain myself upon.

I long to be with you, now I am better, and now my son is in a fair way of recovery. But is it not hard to have it signified to me that at present it will not be taken well if I go?—I suppose, while the reconciliation, which I hope will take place, is negotiating by means of the correspondence so newly opened between you and your sister. But if you would have me come, I will rely on my good intentions, and risque every one's displeasure.

Mr. Brand has business in town; to solicit for a benefice which it is expected the incumbent will be obliged to quit for a better preferment: and, when there, he is to inquire privately after your way of life, and of your health.

He is a very officious young man; and, but that your uncle Harlowe (who has chosen him for this errand) regards him as an oracle, your mother had rather any body else had been sent.

He is one of those puzzling, over-doing gentlemen, who think they see farther into matters than any body else, and are fond of discovered mysteries where there are none, in order to be thought shrewd men.

I can't say I like him, either in the pulpit or out of it: I, who had a father one of the soundest divines and finest scholars in the kingdom; who never made an ostentation of what he knew; but loved and venerated the gospel he taught, preferring ; it to all other learning: to be obliged

to hear a young man depart from his text as soon as he has named it, (so contrary, too, to the example set him by his learned and worthy principal*, when his health permits him to preach;) and throwing about, to a christian and country audience, scraps of Latin and Greek from the Pagan Classics; and not always brought in with great propriety neither, (if I am to judge by the only way given me to judge of them, by the English he puts them into;) is an indication of something wrong, either in his head, or his heart, or both; for, otherwise, his education at the university must have taught him better. You know, my dear Miss Clary, the honour I have for the cloth: it is owing to *that*, that I say what I do.

I know not the day he is to set out; and, as his inquiries are to be private, be pleased to take no notice of this intelligence. I have no doubt that your life and conversation are such as may defy the scrutinies of the most officious inquirer.

I am just now told that you have written a second letter to your sister: but am afraid they will wait for Mr. Brand's report, before farther favour will be obtained from them; for they will not yet believe you are so ill as I fear you are.

But you would soon find that you have an indulgent mother, were she at liberty to act according to her own inclination. And this gives me great hopes that all will end well at last: for I verily think you are in the right way to a reconciliation. God give a blessing to it, and restore your health, and you to all your friends, prays

Your ever affectionate

JUDITH NORTON.

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* Dr. Lewen.

Your good mother has privately sent me five guineas: she is pleased to say to help us in the illness we have been afflicted with; but, more likely, that I might send them to you, as from myself. I hope, therefore, I may send them up, with ten more I have still left.

I will send you word of Mr. Morden's arrival, the moment I know it.

If agreeable, I should be glad to know all that passes between your relations and you.

LETTER XXI.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MRS. NORTON.

Wednesday, Aug. 2.

You give me, my dear Mrs. Norton, great pleasure in hearing of your's and your son's recovery. May you continue, for many, many years, a blessing to each other!

You tell me that you did actually write to my mother, *offering* to enclose to her mine of the 24th past: and you say it was not *required* of you. That is to say, although you cover it over as gently as you could, that your offer was rejected; which makes it evident that no plea will be made for me. Yet, you bid me hope, that the grace I sued for would, *in time*, be granted.

The grace I then sued for was indeed granted; but you are afraid, you say, that they will wait for Mr. Brand's report, before favour will be obtained in return to the second letter which I wrote to my sister; and you add, that I have an indulgent mother, were she at liberty to act

according to her own inclination; and that all will end well at last.

But what, my dear Mrs. Norten, what is the grace I sue for in my second letter?—It is not that they will receive me into favour—If they think it is, they are mistaken. I do not, I cannot expect that. Nor, as I have often said, should I, if they *would* receive me, bear to live in the eye of those dear friends whom I have so grievously offended. 'Tis only, simply, a blessing I ask: a blessing to *die* with; not to *live* with.—Do they know that? and do they know that their unkindness will perhaps shorten my date; so that their favour, if ever they intend to grant it, may come too late?

Once more, I desire you not to think of coming to me. I have no uneasiness now, but what proceeds from the apprehension of seeing a man I would not see for the world, if I could help it; and from the severity of my nearest and dearest relations: a severity *entirely their own*, I doubt; for you tell me that my *brother is at Edinburgh!* You would therefore heighten their severity, and make yourself enemies besides, if you were to come to me—Don't you see that you would?

Mr. Brand may come, if he will. He is a clergyman, and *must mean well;* or I must think so, let him say of me what he will. All my fear is, that, as he knows I am in disgrace with a family whose esteem he is desirous to cultivate; and as he has obligations to my uncle Harlowe and to my father; he will be but a languid acquitter—not that I am afraid of what he, or any body in the world, can hear as to my conduct. You may, my revered and dear friend, indeed you may, rest satisfied, that that is such as may warrant me to challenge the inquiries of the most officious.

I will send you copies of what passes, as you desire, when I have an answer to my second letter. I now begin to wish that I had taken the heart to write to my father himself; or to my mother, at least; instead of to my sister; and yet I doubt my poor mother can do nothing for me of *herself*. A strong confederacy, my dear Mrs. Norton, (a strong confederacy indeed!) against a poor girl, their daughter, sister, niece!—My brother, perhaps, got it renewed before he left them. He needed not—his work is done; and more than done.

Don't afflict yourself about money-matters on my account. I have no occasion for money. I am glad my mother was so considerate to you. I was in pain for you on the same subject. But Heaven will not permit so good a woman to want the humble blessings she was always satisfied with. I wish every individual of our family were but as rich as you!—O my mamma Norton, you are rich! you are rich indeed!—the true riches are such content as you are blessed with.—And I hope in God that I am in the way to be rich too.

Adieu, my ever-indulgent friend. You say all will be at last happy—and I *know* it will—I confide that it will, with as much security, as you may, that I will be, to my last hour,

Your ever grateful and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XXII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday, Aug. 1.

I AM most confoundedly chagrined and disappointed: for here, on Saturday, arrived a messenger from Miss Howe, with a letter to my cousins*; which I knew nothing of till yesterday; when Lady Sarah and Lady Betty were procured to be here, to sit in judgment upon it with the old Peer, and my too kinswomen. And never was bear so miserably baited as thy poor friend!—And for what?—why for the cruelty of Miss Harlowe: For have I committed any *new* offence? and would I not have re-instated myself in her favour upon her own terms, if I could? And is it fair to punish me for what is my misfortune, and not my fault? Such *event-judging* fools as I have for my relations! I am ashamed of them all.

In that of Miss Howe was enclosed one to *her* from Miss Harlowe†, to be transmitted to my cousins, containing a final rejection of me; and that in very vehement and posivite terms; yet she pretends that, in this rejection, she is governed more by *principle* than *passion*—[D——d lie, as ever was told!] and, as a proof that she is, says, that she *can* forgive me, and *does*, on this one condition, that I will never molest her more—the whole letter so written as to make *herself* more admired, *me* more detested.

What we have been told of the agitations and workings, and sighings and sobbings, of the French prophets among

* See Letter XII. of this volume. † See Letter XCI. of Vol. VI.

us formerly, was nothing at all to the scene exhibited by these maudlin souls, at the reading of these letters; and of some affecting passages extracted from another of my fair implacable's to Miss Howe—such lamentations for the loss of so charming a relation! such applandings of her virtue, of her exaltedness of soul and sentiment! such menaces of disinherisons! I, not needing *their* reproaches to be stung to the heart with my own reflections, and with the rage of disappointment; and as sincerely as any of them admiring her—'What the devil,' cried I, 'is all 'this for? Is it not enough to be despised and rejected? 'Can I help her implacable spirit? Would I not repair 'the evils I have made her suffer?—Then was I ready to curse them all, herself and Miss Howe for company: and heartily swore that she should yet be mine.

I now swear it over again to thee—'Were her death 'to follow in a week after the knot is tied, by the Lord 'of Heaven, it *shall* be tied, and she shall die a Love-'lace!'—Tell her so, if thou wilt: but, at the same 'time, tell her that I have no *view to her fortune;* and that I will solemnly resign that, and all pretensions to it, in whose favour she pleases, if she resign life issueless. —I am not so low-minded a wretch, as to be *guilty* of any sordid views to her fortune.—Let her judge for herself, then, whether it be not for her honour rather to leave this world a Lovelace than a Harlowe.

But do not think I will entirely rest a cause so near my heart upon an advocate who so much more admires his client's adversary than his client. I will go to town, in a few days, in order to throw myself at her feet: and I will carry with me, or have at hand, a *resolute, well-prepared* parson; and the ceremony shall be performed, let what will be the consequence.

But if she will permit me to attend her for this purpose at either of the churches mentioned in the license, (which she has by her, and, thank Heaven! has not returned me with my letters,) then will I not disturb her; but meet her at the altar in either chuch, and will engage to bring my two cousins to attend her, and even Lady Sarah and Lady Betty; and my Lord M. in person shall give her to me.

Or, if it will be still more agreeable to her, I will undertake that either Lady Sarah or Lady Betty, or both, shall go to town and attend her down; and the marriage shall be celebrated in their presence, and in that of Lord M., either here or elsewhere, at her own choice.

Do not play me booty, Belford; but sincerely and warmly use all the eloquence thou art master of, to prevail upon her to choose one of these three methods. One of them she *must* choose—by my soul, she must.

Here is Charlotte tapping at my closet-door for admittance. What a devil wants Charlotte?—I will hear no more reproaches!—Come in, girl!

My cousin Charlotte, finding me writing on with too much earnestness to have any regard for politeness to her, and guessing at my subject, besought me to let her see what I had written.

I obliged her. And she was so highly pleased on seeing me so much in earnest, that *she* offered, and I accepted her offer, to write a letter to Miss Harlowe; with permission to treat me in it as she thought fit.

I shall enclose a copy of her letter.

When she *had* written it, she brought it to me, with apologies for the freedom taken with me in it: but I excused it; and she was ready to give me a kiss for joy of

my approbation: and I gave her two for writing it; telling her I had hopes of success from it; and that I thought she had luckily hit it off.

Every one approves of it, as well as I; and is pleased with me for so patiently submitting to be abused, and undertaken for.—If it do not succeed, all the blame will be thrown upon the dear creature's perverseness: her charitable or forgiving disposition, about which she makes such a parade, will be justly questioned; and the piety, of which she is now in full possession, will be transferred to me.

Putting, therefore, my whole confidence in this letter, I postpone all my other alternatives, as also my going to town, till my empress send an answer to my cousin Montague.

But if she persist, and will not promise to take time to *consider* of the matter, thou mayest communicate to her what I had written, as above, before my cousin entered; and, if she be still perverse, assure her, that I *must* and *will* see her—but this with all honour, all humility: and, if I cannot move her in my favour, I will then go abroad, and perhaps never more return to England.

I am sorry thou art, at *this critical time*, so busily employed, as thou informest me thou art, in thy Watford affairs, and in preparing to do Belton justice. If thou wantest my assistance in the latter, command me. Though engrossed by this perverse beauty, and plagued as I am, I will obey thy first summons.

I have great dependence upon thy zeal and thy friendship: hasten back to her, therefore, and resume a task *so* interesting to me, that it is equally the subject of my dreams, as of my waking hours.

LETTER XXIII.

MISS MONTAGUE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

DEAREST MADAM, Tuesday, Aug. 1.

ALL our family is deeply sensible of the injuries you have received at the hands of one of it, whom you only can render in any manner worthy of the relation he stands in to us all: and if, as an act of mercy and charity, the greatest your pious heart can show, you will be pleased to look over his past wickedness and ingratitude, and suffer yourself to be our kinswoman, you will make us the happiest family in the world: and I can engage, that Lord M., and Lady Sarah Sadleir, and Lady Betty Lawrance, and my sister, who are all admirers of your virtues, and of your nobleness of mind, will for ever love and reverence you, and do every thing in all their powers to make you amends for what you have suffered from Mr. Lovelace. This, Madam, we should not, however, dare to petition for, were we not assured, that Mr. Lovelace is most sincerely sorry for his past vileness to you; and that he will, on his knees, beg your pardon, and vow eternal love and honour to you.

Wherefore, *my dearest cousin*, [how you will charm us all, if this agreeable style may be permitted!] for *all* our sakes, for his *soul*'s sake, [you must, I am sure, be so good a lady, as to wish to save a soul!] and allow me to say, for *your own fame*'s sake, condescend to our joint request: and if, by way of encouragement, you will but say you will be glad to see, and to be as much known personally, as you are by fame, to Charlotte Montague, I will, in two days time from the receipt of your permission, wait

upon you, *with* or *without* my sister, and receive your farther commands.

Let me, *our dearest cousin*, [we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of calling you so; let me] entreat you to give me your permission for my journey to London; and put it in the power of Lord M. and of the ladies of the family, to make you what reparation they *can* make you, for the injuries which a person of the greatest merit in the world has received from one of the most audacious men in it; and you will infinitely oblige us all; and particularly her, who repeatedly presumes to style herself

Your affectionate cousin, and obliged servant,

CHARLOTTE MONTAGUE.

LETTER XXIV.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday Morning, Aug. 3. Six o'clock.

I HAVE been so much employed in my own and Belton's affairs, that I could not come to town till last night; having contented myself with sending to Mrs. Lovick, to know, from time to time, the state of the lady's health; of which I received but very indifferent accounts, owing, in a great measure, to letters or advices brought her from her implacable family.

I have now completed my own affairs; and, next week, shall go to Epsom, to endeavour to put Belton's sister into possession of his own house for him: after which, I shall devote myself wholly to your service, and to that of the lady.

I was admitted to her presence last night; and found her visibly altered for the worse. When I went home, I had your letter of Tuesday last put into my hands. Let me tell thee, Lovelace, that I insist upon the performance of thy engagement to me that thou wilt not personally molest her.

[Mr. Belford dates again on Thursday morning, ten o'clock; and gives an account of a conversation which he had just held with the Lady upon the subject of Miss Montague's letter to her, preceding, and upon Mr. Lovelace's alternatives, as mentioned in Letter XXII. which Mr. Belford supported with the utmost earnestness. But, as the result of this conversation will be found in the subsequent letters, Mr. Belford's pleas and arguments in favour of his friend, and the Lady's answers, are omitted.]

LETTER XXV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS MONTAGUE.

DEAR MADAM, Thursday, Aug. 3.

I AM infinitely obliged to you for your kind and condescending letter. A letter, however, which heightens my regrets, as it gives me a new instance of what a happy creature I might have been in an alliance so much approved of by such worthy ladies; and which, on their accounts, and on that of Lord M. would have been so reputable to myself, and was once so desirable.

But indeed, indeed, Madam, my heart sincerely repulses the man who, descended from such a family, could be

guilty, *first*, of such premeditated violence as he has been guilty of; and, as *he* knows, *farther* intended me, on the night previous to the day he set out for Berkshire; and, *next*, pretending to spirit, could be so mean as to wish to lift into that family a person he was capable of abasing into a companionship with the most abandoned of her sex.

Allow me then, dear Madam, to declare with fervour, that I think I never could deserve to be ranked with the ladies of a family so splendid and so noble, if, by vowing love and honour at the altar to such a violator, I could *sanctify*, as I may say, his unprecedented and elaborate wickedness.

Permit me, however, to make one request to my good Lord M., and to Lady Betty, and Lady Sarah, and to your kind self, and your sister—It is, that you will all be pleased to join your authority and interests to prevail upon Mr. Lovelace not to molest me farther.

Be pleased to tell him, that, if I am designed for *life*, it will be very cruel in him to attempt to hunt me out of it; for I am determined never to see him more, if I can help it. The more cruel, because he knows that I have nobody to defend me from him: nor do I wish to engage any body to *his* hurt, or to their own.

If I am, on the other hand, destined for *death*, it will be no less cruel, if he will not permit me to die in peace—since a peaceable and happy end I wish him; indeed I do.

Every worldly good attend you, dear Madam, and every branch of the honourable family, is the wish of one, whose misfortune it is that she is obliged to disclaim any other title than that of,

Dear Madam,

Your and their obliged and faithful servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXVI.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday Afternoon, Aug. 3.

I AM just now agreeably surprised by the following letter, delivered into my hands by a messenger from the lady. The letter she mentions, as enclosed*, I have returned, without taking a copy of it. The contents of it will soon be communicated to you, I presume, by other hands. They are an absolute rejection of thee—*Poor Lovelace!*

TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

SIR, Aug. 3.

YOU have frequently offered to oblige me in any thing that shall be within your power: and I have such an opinion of you, as to be willing to hope that, at the times you made these offers, you meant more than mere compliment.

I have therefore two requests to make to you: the first I will now mention; the other, if this shall be complied with, otherwise not.

It behoves me to leave behind me such an account as may clear up my conduct to several of my friends who will not at present concern themselves about me: and Miss Howe, and her mother, are very solicitous that I will do so.

I am apprehensive that I shall not have time to do this; and you will not wonder that I have less and less inclination to set about such a painful task; especially as I find

* See Miss Harlowe's Letter, No. XXV.

myself unable to look back with patience on what I have suffered; and shall be too much discomposed by the retrospection, were I obliged to make it, to proceed with the requisite temper in a task of *still greater* importance which I have before me.

It is very evident to me that your wicked friend has given you, from time to time, a circumstantial account of all his behaviour *to* me, and devices *against* me; and you have more than once assured me, that he has done my character all the justice I could wish for, both by writing and speech.

Now, Sir, if I may have a fair, a faithful specimen from his letters or accounts to you, written upon some of the most interesting occasions, I shall be able to judge whether there will or will not be a necessity for me, for my honour's sake, to enter upon the solicited task.

You may be assured, from my *enclosed* answer to the letter which Miss Montague has honoured me with, (and which you'll be pleased to return me as soon as read,) that that it is impossible for me ever to think of your friend in the way I am importuned to think of him: he cannot therefore receive any detriment from the requested specimen: and I give you my honour, that no use shall be made of it to his prejudice, in law, or otherwise. And that it may *not*, after I am no more, I assure you, that it is a *main part of my view* that the passages you shall oblige me with shall be always in your own power, and not in that of any other person.

If, Sir, you think fit to comply with my request, the passages I would wish to be transcribed (making neither better nor worse of the matter) are those which he has written to you, on or about the 7th and 8th of June, when I was alarmed by the wicked pretence of a fire; and what

he has written from Sunday, June 11, to the 19th. And in doing this you will much oblige

Your humble servant,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Now, Lovelace, since there are no hopes for thee of her returning favour—since some praise may lie for thy ingenuousness, having never offered [*as more diminutive-minded libertines would have done*] to palliate thy crimes, by aspersing the lady, or her sex—since she may be made easier by it—since thou must fare better from thine own pen than from her's—and, finally, since thy actions have manifested that thy letters are not the most guilty part of what she *knows* of thee—I see not why I may not oblige her, upon her honour, and under the restrictions, and for the reasons she has given; and this without breach of the confidence due to friendly communication; especially, as I might have added, *since thou gloriest in thy pen and in thy wickedness, and canst not be ashamed.*

But, be this as it may, she *will* be obliged before thy remonstrances or clamours against it can come: so, pr'ythee now, make the best of it, and rave not; except for the sake of a pretence against me, and to exercise thy talent of execration:—and, if thou likest to do so for these reasons, rave and welcome.

I long to know what the second request is: but this I know, that if it be any thing less than cutting *thy* throat, or endangering *my* own neck, I will certainly comply; and be proud of having it in my power to oblige her.

And now I am actually going to be busy in the extracts.

LETTER XXVII.

MR. BELFORD, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MADAM, Aug. 3, 4.

You have engaged me to communicate to you, upon honour, (making neither better nor worse of the matter,) what Mr. Lovelace has written to me, in relation to yourself, in the period preceding your going to Hampstead, and in that between the 11th and 19th of June: and you assure me you have no view in this request, but to see if it be necessary for you, from the account he gives, to touch the painful subjects yourself, for the sake of your own character.

Your commands, Madam, are of a very delicate nature, as they may seem to affect the *secrets of private friendship:* but as I know you are not capable of a view, the motives to which you will not own; and as I think the communication may do some credit to my unhappy friend's character, as an *ingenuous* man; though his actions by the most excellent woman in the world have lost him all title to that of an *honourable* one; I obey you with the greater cheerfulness.

[He then proceeds with his extracts, and concludes them with an address to her in his friend's behalf, in the following words:]

'And now, Madam, I have fulfiled your commands; 'and, I hope, have not dis-served my friend with you; 'since you will hereby see the justice he does to your 'virtue in every line he writes. He does the same in all 'his letters, though to his own condemnation: and, give

'me leave to add, that if this ever-amiable sufferer can 'think it in any manner consistent with her honour to re- 'ceive his vows at the altar, on his truly penitent turn of 'mind, I have not the least doubt but that he will make 'her the best and tenderest of husbands. What obligation 'will not the admirable lady hereby lay upon all *his* noble 'family, who so greatly admire her! and, I will presume 'to say, upon *her own*, when the unhappy family aversion '(which certainly has been carried to an unreasonable 'height against him) shall be got over, and a general re- 'conciliation takes place! For who is it that would not 'give these two admirable persons to each other, were 'not his morals an objection?

However this be, I would humbly refer to you, Madam, whether, as you will be mistress of very delicate particulars from *me* his friend, you should not in honour think yourself concerned to pass them by, as if you had never seen them; and not to take any advantage of the communication, not even in argument, as some perhaps might lie, with respect to the *premeditated* design he seems to have had, not against you, *as* you; but as against the *sex*; over whom (I am sorry I can bear witness myself) it is the villanous aim of all libertines to triumph: and I would not, if any misunderstanding should arise between him and me, give him room to reproach me that his losing of you, and (through his usage of you) of his own friends, were owing to what perhaps he would call breach of trust, were he to judge rather by the event than by my intention.

I am, Madam, with the most profound veneration,

Your most faithful humble servant,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXVIII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

SIR, Friday, Aug. 4.

I HOLD myself extremely obliged to you for your communications. I will make no use of them, that you shall have reason to reproach either yourself or me with. I wanted no new lights to make the unhappy man's premeditated baseness to me unquestionable, as my answer to Miss Montague's letter might convince you*.

I must own, in his favour, that he has observed some decency in his accounts to you of the most indecent and shocking actions. And if all his strangely-communicative narrations are equally decent, nothing will be rendered criminally odious by them, but the vile heart that could meditate such contrivances as were much stronger evidences of his inhumanity than of his wit: since men of very contemptible parts and understanding may succeed in the vilest attempts, if they can once bring themselves to trample on the sanctions which bind man to man; and sooner upon an innocent person than upon any other; because such a one is apt to judge of the integrity of others' hearts by its own.

I find I have had great reason to think myself obliged to your intention in the whole progress of my sufferings. It is, however, impossible, Sir, to miss the natural inference on this occasion that lies against his predetermined baseness. But I say the less, because you shall not think I

* See Letter XXV. of this volume.

borrow, from what you have communicated, aggravations that are not needed.

And now, Sir, that I may spare you the trouble of offering any future arguments in his favour, let me tell you that I have weighed every thing thoroughly—all that human vanity could suggest—all that a desirable reconciliation with my friends, and the kind respects of his own, could bid me hope for—the enjoyment of Miss Howe's friendship, the dearest consideration to me, now, of all worldly ones—all these I have weighed: and the result is, and *was* before you favoured me with these communications, that I have more satisfaction in the hope that, in one month, there will be an end of all with me, than in the most agreeable things that could happen from an alliance with Mr. Lovelace, although I were to be assured he would make the best and tenderest of husbands. But as to the rest; if, satisfied with the evils he has brought upon me, he will forbear all further persecutions of me, I will, to my last hour, wish him good: although *he hath overwhelmed the fatherless, and digged a pit for his friend:* fatherless may *she* well be called, and motherless too, who has been denied all paternal protection, and motherly forgiveness.

And now, Sir, acknowledging gratefully your favour in the extracts, I come to the second request I had to make you; which requires a great deal of courage to mention: and which courage nothing but a great deal of distress, and a very destitute condition, can give. But, if improper, I can but be denied; and dare to say I shall be at least excused. Thus, then, I preface it:

'You see, Sir, that I am thrown absolutely into the 'hands of strangers, who, although as kind and compas-

'sionate as strangers can be wished to be, are, never-
'theless, persons from whom I cannot expect any thing
'more than pity and good wishes; nor can my memory
'receive from them any more protection than my person,
'if either should need it.

'If then I request it, of the *only* person possessed of
'materials that will enable him to do my character justice;

'And who has courage, independence, and ability to
'to oblige me;

'To be the protector of my memory, as I may say;

'And to be my *executor*; and to see some of my dying requests performed;

'And if I leave it to him to do the whole in his own
'way, manner, and time; consulting, however, in requi-
'site cases, my dear Miss Howe;

'I presume to hope that this my second request may
'be granted.'

And if it may, these satisfactions will accrue to me from the favour done me, and the office undertaken:

'It will be an honour to my memory, with all those
'who shall know that I was so well satisfied of my inno-
'cence, that, having not time to write my own story, I
'could intrust it to the relation which the destroyer of
'my fame and fortunes has given of it.

'I shall not be apprehensive of involving any one in
'troubles or hazards by this task, either with my own re-
'lations, or with your friend; having dispositions to make
'which perhaps my own friends will not be so well pleased
'with as it were to be *wished* they would be;' as I intend not unreasonable ones: but you know, Sir, where *self* is judge, matters, even with *good people*, will not always be rightly judged of.

'I shall also be freed from the pain of recollecting

'things that my soul is vexed at; and this at a time when 'its tumults should be allayed, in order to make way for 'the most important preparation.

'And who knows, but that Mr. Belford, who already, 'from a principle of humanity, is touched at my misfor-'tunes, when he comes to revolve the whole story, placed 'before him in one strong light: and when he shall have 'the catastrophe likewise before him; and shall become 'in a manner interested in it; who knows, but that, *from 'a still higher principle*, he may so regulate his future 'actions as to find his own reward in the everlasting wel-'fare which is wished him by his

'Obliged servant,

'CLARISSA HARLOWE?'

LETTER XXIX.

MR. BELFORD, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MADAM, Friday, Aug. 4.

I AM so sensible of the honour done me in your's of this day, that I would not delay for one moment the answering of it. I hope you will live to see many happy years; and to be your own executrix in those points which your heart is most set upon. But, in case of survivorship, I most cheerfully accept of the sacred office you are pleased to offer me; and you may absolutely rely upon my fidelity, and, if possible, upon the literal performance of every article you shall enjoin me.

The effect of the kind wish you conclude with, has been my concern ever since I have been admitted to the honour

of your conversation. It shall be my whole endeavour that it be not vain. The happiness of approaching you, which this trust, as I presume, will give me frequent opportunities of doing, must necessarily promote the desirable end: since it will be impossible to be a witness of your piety, equanimity, and other virtues, and not aspire to emulate you. All I beg is, that you will not suffer any future candidate, or event, to displace me; unless some new instances of unworthiness appear either in the morals or behaviour of,

Madam,

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XXX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday Night, Aug. 4.

I HAVE actually delivered to the lady the extracts she requested me to give her from your letters. I do assure you that I have made the very best of the matter for you, *not* that conscience, but that friendship, could oblige me to make. I have changed or omitted some free words. The warm description of her person in the *fire-scene*, as I may call it, I have omitted. I have told her, that I have done justice to you, in the justice you have done to her unexampled virtue. But take the very words which I wrote to her immediately following the extracts:

'And now, Madam,'—*See the paragraph marked*

with an inverted comma [thus ‘], Letter XXVII. of this volume.

The lady is extremely uneasy at the thoughts of your attempting to visit her. For Heaven's sake, (your word being given,) and for pity's sake, (for she is really in a very weak and languishing way,) let me beg of you not to think of it.

Yesterday afternoon she received a cruel letter (as Mrs. Lovick supposes it to be, by the effect it had upon her) from her sister, in answer to one written last Saturday, entreating a blessing and forgiveness from her parents.

She acknowledges, that if the same decency and justice are observed in all your letters, as in the extracts I have obliged her with, (as I have assured her they are,) she shall think herself freed from the necessity of writing her own story: and this is an advantage to thee which thou oughtest to thank me for.

But what thinkest thou is the second request she had to make to me? no other than that I would be her *executor!* —Her motives will appear before thee in proper time; and then, I dare to answer, will be satisfactory.

You cannot imagine how proud I am of this trust. I am afraid I shall too soon come into the execution of it. As she is always writing, what a melancholy pleasure will the perusal and disposition of her papers afford me! such a sweetness of temper, so much patience and resignation, as she seems to be mistress of; yet writing of and in the midst of *present* distresses! how *much more* lively and affecting, for that reason, must her style be; her mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty, (the events then hidden in the womb of fate,) *than* the dry, narrative, unanimated style of persons, relating difficulties and dangers

surmounted; the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader!

Saturday Morning, Aug. 5.

I AM just returned from visiting the lady, and thanking her in person for the honour she has done me; and assuring her, if called to the sacred trust, of the utmost fidelity and exactness.

I found her very ill. I took notice of it. She said, she had received a second hard-hearted letter from her sister; and she had been writing a letter (and that on her knees) directly to her mother; which, *before*, she had not had the courage to do. It was for a last blessing and forgiveness. No wonder, she said, that I saw her affected. Now that I had accepted of the last charitable office for her, (for which, as well as for complying with her other request, she thanked me,) I should one day have all these letters before me: and could she have *a kind one* in return to that she had been now writing, to *counterbalance* the unkind one she had from her sister, she might be induced to show me both together—otherwise, for her sister's sake, it were no matter how few saw the poor Bella's letter.

I knew she would be displeased if I had censured the cruelty of her relations: I therefore only said, that surely she must have enemies, who hoped to find their account in keeping up the resentments of her friends against her.

It may be so, Mr. Belford, said she: the unhappy never want enemies. One fault, wilfully committed, authorizes the imputation of many more. Where the ear is opened to accusations, accusers will not be wanting; and every one will officiously come with stories against a disgraced

child, where nothing dare be said in her favour. I should have been wise in time, and not have needed to be convinced, by my own misfortunes, of the truth of what common experience daily demonstrates. Mr. Lovelace's baseness, my father's inflexibility, my sister's reproaches, are the natural consequences of my own rashness; so I must make the best of my hard lot. Only, as these consequences follow one another so closely, while they are *new*, how can I help being anew affected?

I asked, if a letter written by myself, by her doctor or apothecary, to any of her friends, representing her low state of health, and great humility, would be acceptable? or if a journey to any of them would be of service, I would gladly undertake it in person, and strictly conform to her orders, to whomsoever she should direct me to apply.

She earnestly desired that nothing of this sort might be attempted, especially without her knowledge and consent. Miss Howe, she said, had done harm by her kindly-intended zeal; and if there were room to expect favour by mediation, she had ready at hand a kind friend, Mrs. Norton, who for piety and prudence had few equals; and who would let slip no opportunity to endeavour to do her service.

I let her know that I was going out of town till Monday: she wished me pleasure; and said she should be glad to see me on my return.

Adieu!

LETTER XXXI.

MISS AR. HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's of July* 29. *See Letter* XIX. *of this volume.*]

SISTER CLARY, Thursday Morn. Aug. 3.

I WISH you would not trouble me with any more of your letters. You had always a knack at writing; and depended upon making every one do what you would when you wrote. But your wit and folly have undone you. And now, as all naughty creatures do, when they can't help themselves, you come begging and praying, and make others as uneasy as yourself.

When I wrote last to you, I *expected* that I should not be at rest.

And so you'd creep on, by little and little, till you'll want to be received again.

But you only hope for *forgiveness* and a *blessing*, you say. A blessing for what, sister Clary? Think for what! —However, I read your lettter to my father and mother.

I won't tell you what my father said—one who has the true sense you boast to have of your misdeeds, may guess, without my telling you, what a justly-incensed father would say on such an occasion.

My poor mother—O wretch! what has not your ungrateful folly cost my poor mother!—Had you been less a darling, you would not, perhaps, have been so graceless: But I never in my life saw a cockered favourite come to good.

My heart is full, and I can't help writing my mind; for

your crimes have disgraced us all; and I am afraid and ashamed to go to any public or private assembly or diversion: And why?—I *need* not say why, when your actions are the subjects either of the open talk, or of the affronting whispers, of both sexes at all such places.

Upon tho whole, I am sorry I have no more comfort to send you: but I find nobody willing to forgive you.

I don't know what *time* may do for you; and when it is seen that your penitence is not owing more to disappointment than to true conviction: for it is too probable, Miss Clary, that, had you gone on as swimmingly as you expected, and had not your feather-headed villain abandoned you, we should have heard nothing of these moving supplications; nor of any thing but defiances from *him*, and a guilt gloried in from *you*. And this is every one's opinion, as well as that of

Your afflicted sister,

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

I send this by a particular hand, who undertakes to give it you or leave it for you by to-morrow night.

LETTER XXXII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO HER MOTHER.

HONOURED MADAM, Saturday, Aug. 5.

No self-convicted criminal ever approached her angry and just judge with greater awe, nor with a truer contrition, than I do you by these lines.

Indeed I must say, that if the matter of my humble prayer had not respected my future welfare, I had not dared to take this liberty. But my heart is set upon it, as upon a thing next to God Almighty's forgiveness necessary for me.

Had my happy sister known my distresses, she would have wrung my heart, as she has done, by a severity, which I must needs think unkind and unsisterly.

But complaint of any unkindness from her belongs not to me: yet, as she is pleased to write that it must be seen that my penitence is less owing to disappointment than to true conviction, permit me, Madam, to insist upon it, that, if such a plea can be allowed me, I am actually *entitled* to the blessing I sue for; since my humble prayer is founded upon a true and unfeigned repentance: and this you will the readier believe, if the creature who never, to the best of her remembrance, told her mamma a wilful falshood may be credited, when she declares, as she does, in the most solemn manner, that she met the seducer with a determination not to go off with him: that the rash step was owing more to compulsion than to infatuation: and that her heart was so little in it, that she repented and grieved from the moment she found herself in his power; and for every moment after, for several weeks *before* she had any cause from him to apprehend the usage she met with.

Wherefore, on my knees, my ever-honoured Mamma, (for on my knees I write this letter,) I do most humbly beg your blessing: say but, in so many words, (I ask you not, Madam, to call me your daughter,)—*Lost, unhappy wretch, I forgive you! and may God bless you!*—This is all! Let me, on a blessed scrap of paper, but see one

sentence to this effect, under your dear hand, that I may hold it to my heart in my most trying struggles, and I shall think it a passport to Heaven. And, if I do not too much presume, and it were WE instead of I, and both your honoured names subjoined to it, I should then have nothing more to wish. Then would I say, 'Great and merciful God! thou seest here in this paper thy poor unworthy creature absolved by her justly-offended parents: Oh! join, for my Redeemer's sake, thy all-gracious *fiat*, and receive a repentant sinner to the arms of thy mercy!'

I can conjure you, Madam, by no subject of motherly tenderness, that will not, in the opinion of my severe censurers, (before whom this humble address must appear,) add to reproach: let me therefore, for God's sake, prevail upon you to pronounce me blest and forgiven, since you will thereby sprinkle comfort through the last hours of

Your

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXIII.

MISS MONTAGUE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's of Aug.* 3. *See Letter* XXV. *of this volume.*]

DEAR MADAM, Monday, Aug 7.

WE were all of opinion, *before* your letter came, that Mr. Lovelace was utterly unworthy of you, and deserved

condign punishment, rather than to be blessed with such a wife: and hoped far *more* from your kind consideration for *us*, than any we supposed you could have for so base an *injurer*. For we were all determined to love you, and admire you, let *his* behaviour to you be what it would.

But, after your letter, what can be said?

I am, however, commanded to write in all the subscribing names, to let you know how greatly your sufferings have affected us: to tell you that my Lord M. has forbid him ever more to enter the doors of the apartments where he shall be: and as you labour under the unhappy effects of your friends' displeasure, which may subject you to inconveniencies, his Lordship, and Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, beg of you to accept, for your life, or, at least, till you are admitted to enjoy your own estate, of one hundred guineas *per* quarter, which will be regularly brought you by an especial hand, and of the enclosed bank-bill for a beginning. And do not, dearest Madam, we all beseech you, do not think you are beholden (for this token of Lord M.'s, and Lady Sarah's, and Lady Betty's, love to you) to the *friends of this vile man;* for he has not one friend left among us.

We each of us desire to be favoured with a place in your esteem; and to be considered upon the same foot of relationship as if what once was so much our pleasure to hope *would* be, *had* been. And it shall be our united prayer, that you may recover health and spirits, and live to see many happy years: and, since this wretch can no more be pleaded for, that, when he is gone abroad, as he now is preparing to do, we may be permitted the honour of a personal acquaintance with a lady who has no

equal. These are the earnest requests, dearest young lady, of

Your affectionate friends,
and most faithful servants,
M.
SARAH SADLEIR.
ELIZ. LAWRANCE.
CHARL. MONTAGUE.
MARTH. MONTAGUE.

You will break the hearts of the three first-named more particularly, if you refuse them your acceptance. Dearest young lady, punish not *them* for *his* crimes. We send by a particular hand, which will bring us, we hope, your accepting favour.

Mr. Lovelace writes by the same hand; but he knows nothing of our letter, nor we of his: for we shun each other; and one part of the house holds *us*, another *him*, the remotest from each other.

LETTER XXXIV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sat. Aug. 23.

I AM so excessively disturbed at the contents of Miss Harlowe's answer to my cousin Charlotte's letter of Tuesday last, (which was given her by the same fellow that gave me your's,) that I have hardly patience or consideration enough to weigh what you write.

She had need indeed to cry out for mercy for herself

from *her* friends, who knows not how to show any! She is a true daughter of the Harlowes!—By my soul, Jack, she is a true daughter of the Harlowes! Yet has she so many excellencies, that I must love her; and, fool that I am, love her the more for her despising me.

Thou runnest on with thy cursed nonsensical *reformado* rote, of dying, dying, dying! and, having once got the word by the end, canst not help foisting it in at every period! The devil take me, if I don't think thou wouldst give her poison with thy own hands, rather than she should recover, and rob thee of the merit of being a conjurer!

But no more of thy cursed knell; thy changes upon death's candlestick turned bottom-upwards: she'll live to bury me; I see that: for, by my soul, I can neither eat, drink, nor sleep, nor, what is still worse, love any woman in the world but her. Nor care I to look upon a woman now: on the contrary, I turn my head from every one I meet: except by chance an eye, an air, a feature, strikes me, resembling her's in some glancing-by face; and then I cannot forbear looking again: though the second look recovers me; for there can be nobody like her.

But surely, Belford, the devil's in this woman! The more I think of her nonsense and obstinacy, the less patience I have with her. Is it possible she can do herself, her family, her friends, so much justice any *other* way, as by marrying me? Were she sure she should live but a day, she ought to die a wife. If her *christian revenge* will not let her wish to do so for her *own* sake, ought she not for the sake of her family, and of her sex, which she pretends sometimes to have so much concern for? And if no *sake* is dear enough to move her Harlowe-spirit in my favour, has she any title to the pity thou so pitifully art always bespeaking for her?

As to the difference which her letter has made between me and the stupid family here, [and I must tell thee we are all broke in pieces,] I value not that of a button. They are fools to anathematize and curse me, who can give them ten curses for one, were they to hold it for a day together.

I have one half of the house to myself; and that the best; for the great enjoy that least which costs them most: *grandeur* and *use* are two things: the common part is their's; the state part is mine: and here I lord it, and *will* lord it, as long as I please; while the two pursy sisters, the old gouty brother, and the two musty nieces, are stived up in the other half, and dare not stir for fear of meeting me: whom, (that's the jest of it,) they have forbidden coming into their apartments, as I have them into mine. And so I have them all prisoners, while I range about as I please. Pretty dogs and *doggesses* to quarrel and bark at me, and yet, whenever I appear, afraid to pop out of their kennels; or, if out before they see me, at the sight of me run growling in again, with their flapt ears, their sweeping dewlaps, and their quivering tails curling inwards.

And here, while I am thus worthily waging war with beetles, drones, wasps, and hornets, and am all on fire with the rage of slighted love, thou art regaling thyself with phlegm and rock-water, and art going on with thy reformation-scheme and thy exultations in my misfortunes!

The devil take thee for an insensible dough-baked varlet! I have no more patience with thee than with the lady; for thou knowest nothing either of love or friendship, but art as unworthy of the one, as incapable of the other; else wouldst thou not rejoice, as thou dost under the *grimace of pity*, in my disappointments.

And thou art a pretty fellow, art thou not? to engage to transcribe for her some parts of my letters written to thee in confidence? Letters that thou shouldest sooner have parted with thy cursed tongue, than have owned thou ever hadst received such: yet these are now to be communicated to *her!* But I charge thee, and woe be to thee if it be too late! that thou do not oblige her with a line of mine.

If thou *hast* done it, the least vengeance I will take is to break through *my* honour given to thee not to visit her, as thou wilt have broken through *thine* to me, in communicating letters written under the seal of friendship.

I am now convinced, too sadly for my hopes, by her letter to my cousin Charlotte, that she is determined never to have me.

Unprecedented wickedness, she calls mine to her. But how does *she* know what love, in its flaming ardour, will stimulate men to do? How does *she* know the requisite distinctions of the words she uses in this case?—To think the *worst*, and to be able to *make comparisons* in these *very* delicate situations, must she not be less delicate than I had imagined her to be?—But she has heard that the devil is black; and having a mind to make one of me, brays together, in the mortar of her wild fancy, twenty chimney-sweepers, in order to make one sootier than ordinary rise out of the dirty mass.

But what a whirlwind does she raise in my soul by her proud contempts of me! Never, never, was mortal man's pride so mortified! How does she sink me, even in my own eyes!—'*Her heart* sincerely repulses me, she says, 'for my MEANNESS!'—Yet she intends to reap the benefit of what she calls so!—Curse upon her *haughtiness*, and her *meanness*, at the same time!—Her haughtiness to *me*,

and her meanness to *her own relations;* more unworthy of kindred with her, than I can be, or I am *mean* indeed.

Yet who but must admire, who but must adore her; Oh! that cursed, cursed house! But for the women of that!—Then their d——d potions! But for *those*, had her *unimpaired* intellects, and the *majesty of her virtue*, saved her, as once it did by her humble eloquence*, another time by her terrifying menaces against her own life†.

Yet in both these to find her power over me, and my love for her, and to hate, to despise, and to refuse me!—She might have done this with some show of justice, had the last-intended violation been perpetrated:—but to go away conqueress and triumphant in every light!—Well may she despise me for suffering her to do so.

She left me *low* and *mean* indeed!—And the impression holds with her.—I could tear my flesh, that I gave her not cause—that I humbled her not *indeed;*—or that I staid not in town to attend her motions instead of Lord M.'s, till I could have exalted myself, by giving to myself a wife superior to all trial, to all temptation.

I will venture one more letter to her, however; and if that don't do, or procure me an answer, then will I endeavour to see her, let what *will* be the consequence. If she get out of my way, I will do some noble mischef to the vixen girl whom she most loves, and then quit the kingdom for ever.

And now, Jack, since thy hand is in at communicating the contents of private letters, tell her this, if thou wilt.

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* In the fire-scene, Vol. IV. Letter LIX.

† Vol. VI. Letter XIII. in the pen-knife-scene.

And add to it, That if SHE abandon me, GOD will: and what then will be the fate of

Her

LOVELACE.

LETTER XXXV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

[*In answer to Letter* XXII. *of this volume.*]

Monday, Aug. 7.

AND so you have actually delivered to the fair implacable extracts of letters written in the confidence of friendship! Take care—take care, Belford—I do indeed love you better than I love any man in the world: but this is a very delicate point. The matter is grown very serious to me. My heart is bent upon having her. And have her I will, though I marry her in the agonies of death.

She is very earnest, you say, that I will not offer to molest her. *That*, let me tell her, will absolutely depend upon herself, and the answer she returns, whether by pen and ink, or the contemptuous one of silence, which she bestowed upon my last four to her: and I will write it in such humble, and in such reasonable terms, that, if she be not a true Harlowe, she *shall* forgive me. But as to the *executorship* which she is for conferring upon thee—thou shalt not be her *excutor:* let me perish if thou shalt.—Nor shall she die. Nobody shall be any thing, nobody shall *dare* to be any thing, to her, but I—thy happiness

is already too great, to be admitted daily to her presence; to look upon her, to talk to her, to hear her talk, while I am forbid to come within view of her window—What a reprobation is this, of the man who was once more dear to her than all the men in the world!—And now to be able to look down upon me, while her exalted head is hid from me among the stars, sometimes with scorn, at other times with pity; I cannot bear it.

This I tell thee, that if I have not success in my effort by letter, I will overcome the creeping folly that has found its way to my heart, or I will tear it out in her presence, and throw it at her's, that she may see how much more tender than her own that organ is, which she, and you, and every one else, have taken the liberty to call callous.

Give notice to the people who live back and edge, and on either hand, of the cursed mother, to remove their best effects, if I am rejected: for the first vengeance I shall take will be to set fire to that den of serpents. Nor will there be any fear of taking them when they are in any act that has *the relish of salvation in it*, as Shakspeare says —so that my revenge, if they perish in the flames I shall light up, will be complete as to them.

LETTER XXXVI.

MR. LOVELACE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, Aug. 7.

LITTLE as I have reason to expect either your patient ear, or forgiving heart, yet cannot I forbear to write to you once more, (as a more pardonable intrusion, perhaps, than a visit would be,) to beg of you to put it in my

power to atone, as far as it is possible to atone, for the injuries I have done you.

Your angelic purity, and my awakened conscience, are standing records of your exalted merit, and of my detestable baseness: but your forgiveness will lay me under an eternal obligation to you.—Forgive me then, my dearest life, my earthly good, the visible anchor of my future hope!—As you, (who believe you have something to be forgiven for,) hope for pardon yourself, forgive me, and consent to meet me, upon your own conditions, and in whose company you please, at the holy altar, and to give yourself a title to the most repentant and affectionate heart that ever beat in a human bosom.

But, perhaps, a time of probation may be required. It may be impossible for you, as well from *indisposition* as *doubt*, so soon to receive me to absolute favour as my heart wishes to be received. In this case, I will submit to your pleasure; and there shall be no penance which you can impose that I will not cheerfully undergo, if you will be pleased to give me hope that, after an expiation, suppose of months, wherein the regularity of my future life and actions shall convince you of my reformation, you will at last be mine.

Let me beg the favour then of a few lines, encouraging me in this *conditional* hope, if it must not be a still *nearer* hope, and a more generous encouragement.

If you refuse me this, you will make me desperate. But even then I must, at all events, throw myself at your feet, that I may not charge myself with the omission of any earnest, any humble effort, to move you in my favour: for in YOU, Madam, in YOUR *forgiveness*, are centred my hopes as to *both worlds:* since to be reprobated finally by *you*, will leave me without expectation of mercy from *above!* For I am now awakened enough to think that

to be forgiven by injured innocents is *necessary* to the Divine pardon; the Almighty putting into the power of such, (as is reasonable to believe,) the wretch who causelessly and capitally offends them. And *who* can be entitled to this power, if you are not?

Your cause, Madam, in a word, I look upon to be the *cause of virtue*, and, as such, the *cause of God*. And may I not expect that He will assert it in the perdition of a man, who has acted by a person of the most spotless purity as I have done, if *you*, by rejecting me, show that I have offended beyond the possibility of forgiveness.

I do most solemnly assure you that no temporal or wordly views induce me to this earnest address. I deserve not forgiveness from *you*. Nor do my Lord M. and his sisters from *me*. I despise them from my heart for presuming to imagine that I will be controuled by the prospect of any benefits in their power to confer. There is not a person breathing, but yourself, who shall prescribe to me. Your whole conduct, Madam, has been so nobly principled, and your resentments are so admirably just, that you appear to me even in a divine light; and in an infinitely more amiable one at the same time than you could have appeared in, had you not suffered the barbarous wrongs, that now fill my mind with anguish and horror at my own recollected villany to the most excellent of women.

I *repeat*, that all I beg for the present is a few lines to guide my doubtful steps; and, (if possible for you so far to condescend,) to encourage me to hope that, if I can justify my present vows by my future conduct, I may be permitted the honour to style myself

Eternally your's,

R. LOVELACE.

LETTER XXXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO LORD M. AND TO THE LADIES OF HIS HOUSE.

[*In reply to Miss Montague's of Aug.* 7. *See Letter* XXXIII. *of this volume.*]

Tuesday, Aug. 8.

Excuse me, my good Lord, and my ever-honoured Ladies, from accepting of your noble quarterly bounty; and allow me to return, with all grateful acknowledgment, and true humility, the enclosed earnest of your goodness to me. Indeed I have no need of the one, and cannot possibly want the other: but, nevertheless, have such a sense of your generous favour, that, to my last hour, I shall have pleasure in contemplating upon it, and be proud of the place I hold in the esteem of such venerable persons, to whom I once had the ambition to hope to be related.

But give me leave to express my concern that you have banished your kinsman from your presence and favour: since now, perhaps, he will be under less restraint than ever; and since I in particular, who had hoped by your influences to remain unmolested for the remainder of my days, may be again subjected to his persecutions.

He has not, my good Lord, and my dear Ladies, offended against *you*, as he has against *me*; and yet you could all very generously intercede for him with *me*: and shall I be *very* improper, if I desire, for my own peace-sake; for the sake of other poor creatures, who may be still injured by him, if he be made quite desperate; and for the sake of all your worthy family; that you will extend to *him*

that forgiveness which you hope for from *me?* and this the rather, as I presume to think, that his daring and impetuous spirit will not be subdued by violent methods; since I have no doubt that the gratifying of a present passion will be always more prevalent with him than any future prospects, however unwarrantable the one, or beneficial the other.

Your resentments on my account are extremely generous, as your goodness to me is truly noble: but I am not without hope that he will be properly affected by the evils he has made me suffer; and that, when I am laid low and forgotten, your whole honourable family will be enable to rejoice in his reformation; and see many of those happy years together, which, my good Lord, and my dear Ladies, you so kindly wish to

Your ever-grateful and obliged

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday Night, Aug. 10.

You have been informed by Tourville, how much Belton's illness and affairs have engaged *me*, as well as Mowbray and him, since my former. I called at Smith's on Monday, in my way to Epsom.

The lady was gone to chapel: but I had the satisfaction to hear she was not worse; and left my compliments, and an intimation that I should be out of town for three or four days.

I refer myself to Tourville, who will let you know the difficulty we had to drive out this *meek* mistress, and *frugal* manager, with her cubs, and to give the poor fellow's sister possession for him of his own house; he skulking mean while at an inn at Croydon, too dispirited to appear in his own cause.

But I must observe that we were probably but just in time to save the shattered remains of his fortune from this rapacious woman, and her accomplices: for, as he cannot live long, and she thinks so, we found she had certainly taken measures to set up a marriage, and keep possession of all for herself and her sons.

Tourville will tell you how I was forced to chastise the quondam hostler in her sight, before I could drive him out of the house. He had the insolence to lay hands on me: and I made him take but one step from the top to the bottom of a pair of stairs. I thought his neck and all his bones had been broken. And then, he being carried out neck-and-heels, Thomasine thought fit to walk out after him.

Charming consequences of *keeping;* the state we have been so fond of extolling!—Whatever it may be thought of in strong health, *sickness* and *declining spirits* in the keeper will bring him to see the difference.

She should soon have him, she told a confidant, in the space of six foot by five; meaning his bed: and then she would let nobody come near him but whom she pleased. The hostler-fellow, I suppose, would then have been his physician; his will ready made for him; and widows' weeds probably ready provided; who knows, but she to appear in them in his own sight? as once I knew an instance in a wicked wife; insulting a husband she hated, when she thought him past recovery: though it gave the

man such spirits, and such a turn, that he got over it, and lived to see *her* in her coffin, dressed out in the very weeds she had insulted him in.

So much, for the present, for Belton and his Thomasine.

I BEGIN to pity thee heartily, now I see thee in earnest in the fruitless love thou expressest to this angel of a woman; and the rather, as, say what thou wilt, it is impossible she should get over her illness, and her friends' implacableness, of which she has had fresh instances.

I hope thou art not indeed displeased with the extracts I have made from thy letters for her. The letting her know the justice thou hast done to her virtue in them, is so much in favour of thy ingenuousness, (a quality, let me repeat, that gives thee a superiority over common libertines,) that I think in my heart I was right; though to any other woman, and to one who had not known the worst of thee that she could know, it might have been wrong.

If the *end* will justify the *means*, it is plain, that I have done well with regard to ye both; since I have made *her* easier, and *thee* appear in a better light to her, than otherwise thou wouldst have done.

But if, nevertheless, thou art dissatisfied with my having obliged her in a point, which I acknowledge *to be delicate*, let us canvas this matter at our first meeting: and then I will show thee what the extracts *were*, and what connections I gave them in thy favour.

But surely thou dost not pretend to say what I shall, or shall not do, as to the executorship.

I am my own man, I hope. I think thou shouldst be glad to have the justification of her memory left to one, who, at the same time, thou mayest be assured, will

treat thee, and thy actions, with all the lenity the case will admit.

I cannot help expressing my surprise at one instance of thy self-partiality; and that is, where thou sayest she had need, indeed, to cry out for mercy herself from *her* friends, who knows not how so show any.

Surely thou canst not think the cases alike—for she, as I understand, desires but a last blessing, and a last forgiveness, for a fault in a manner *involuntary*, if a fault at all; and does not so much as *hope* to be *received;* thou, to be forgiven *premeditated* wrongs, (which, nevertheless, she forgives, on condition to be no more molested by thee;) and hopest to be *received into favour*, and to make the finest jewel in the world thy absolute property in consequence of that forgiveness.

I will now briefly proceed to relate what has passed since my last, as to the excellent lady. By the account I shall give thee, thou wilt see that she has troubles enough upon her, all springing originally from thyself, without needing to add more to them by new vexations. And as long as thou canst exert thyself so very cavalierly at M. Hall, where every one is thy prisoner, I see not but the bravery of thy spirit may be as well gratified in domineering there over half a dozen persons of rank and distinction, as it could be over an helpless orphan, as I may call this lady, since she has not a single friend to stand by her, if I do not; and who will think herself happy, if she can refuge herself from thee, and from all the world, in the arms of death.

My last was dated on Saturday.

On Sunday, in compliance with her doctor's advice, she took a little airing. Mrs. Lovick, and Mr. Smith and his wife, were with her. After being at Highgate chapel at

divine service, she treated them with a little repast; and in the afternoon was at Islington church, in her way home; returning tolerably cheerful.

She had received several letters in my absence, as Mrs. Lovick acquainted me, besides your's. Your's, it seems, much distressed her; but she ordered the messenger, who pressed for an answer, to be told that it did not require an immediate one.

On Wednesday she received a letter from her uncle Harlowe*, in answer to one she had written to her mother on Saturday on her knees. It must be a very cruel one, Mrs. Lovick says, by the effects it had upon her: for, when she received it, she was intending to take an afternoon airing in a coach: but was thrown into so violent a fit of hysterics upon it, that she was forced to lie down; and (being not recovered by it) to go to bed about eight o'clock.

On Thursday morning she was up very early; and had recourse to the Scriptures to calm her mind, as she told Mrs. Lovick: and, weak as she was, would go in a chair to Lincoln's-inn chapel, about eleven. She was brought home a little better; and then sat down to write to her uncle. But was obliged to leave off several times—to struggle, as she told Mrs. Lovick, for an humble temper. 'My heart, said she to the good woman, is a proud heart, 'and not yet, I find, enough mortified to my condition; 'but, do what I can, will be for prescribing resenting 'things to my pen.'

I arrived in town from Belton's this Thursday evening; and went directly to Smith's. She was too ill to receive my visit. But, on sending up my compliments, she sent

* See Letter XLI. of this volume.

me down word that she should be glad to see me in the morning.

Mrs. Lovick obliged me with the copy of a meditation collected by the lady from the Scriptures. She has entitled it *Poor mortals the cause of their own misery;* so entitled, I presume, with intention to take off the edge of her repinings at hardships so disproportioned to her fault, were her fault even as great as she is inclined to think it. We may see, by this, the method she takes to fortify her mind, and to which she owes, in a great measure, the magnanimity with which she bears her undeserved persecutions.

MEDITATION.

Poor mortals the cause of their own misery.

Say not thou, it is through the Lord that I fell away; for thou oughtest not to do the thing that he hateth.

Say not thou, he hath caused me to err; for he hath no need of the sinful man.

He himself made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel;

If thou wilt, to keep the commandments, and to perform acceptable faithfulness.

He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thine hand to whether thou wilt.

He hath commanded no man to do wickedly: neither hath he given any man licence to sin.

And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is only *in thee.*

Deliver me from all my offences: and make me not a rebuke unto the foolish.

When thou with rebuke dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away, like as it were

a moth fretting a garment: every man, therefore, is vanity.

Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

The troubles of my heart are enlarged. O bring thou me out of my distresses!

Mrs. Smith gave me the following particulars of a conversation that passed between herself and a young clergyman, on Tuesday afternoon, who, as it appears, was employed to make inquiries about the lady by her friends.

He came into the shop in a riding-habit, and asked for some Spanish snuff; and finding only Mrs. Smith there, he desired to have a little talk with her in the back-shop.

He beat about the bush in several distant questions, and at last began to talk more directly about Miss Harlowe.

He said he knew her before her *fall*, [that was his impudent word;] and gave the substance of the following account of her, as I collected it from Mrs. Smith:

'She was then, he said, the admiration and delight of 'every body: he lamented, with great solemnity, her '*backsliding*; another of his phrases. Mrs. Smith said, 'he was a fine scholar; for he spoke several things *she* '*understood not*; and either in Latin or Greek, she 'could not tell which; but was so good as to give her the 'English of them without asking. A fine thing, she said, 'for a scholar to be so condescending!'

He said, 'Her going off with so vile a rake had given 'great scandal and offence to all the neighbouring ladies, 'as well as to her friends.'

He told Mrs. Smith 'how much she used to be followed

'by every one's eye, whenever she went abroad, or to 'church; and praised and blessed by every tongue, as 'she passed; especially by the poor: that she gave the 'fashion to the fashionable, without seeming herself to 'intend it, or to know she did: that, however, it was 'pleasant to see ladies imitate her in dress and behaviour, 'who being unable to come up to her in grace and ease, 'exposed but their own affectation and awkwardness, at 'the time that they thought themselves secure of general 'approbation, because they wore the same things, and put 'them on in the same manner, that *she* did, who had every 'body's admiration; little considering, that were *her* 'person like *theirs*, or if she had had *their* defects, she 'would have brought up a very different fashion; for 'that *nature* was her guide in every thing, and *ease* her 'study; which, joined with a mingled dignity and con-'descension in her air and manner, whether she received 'or paid a compliment, distinguished her above all her 'sex.

'He spoke not, he said, his own sentiments only on this 'occasion, but those of every body: for that the praises 'of Miss Clarissa Harlowe were such a favourite topic, 'that a person who could not speak well upon any other 'subject, was sure to speak well upon that; because he 'could say nothing but what he had heard repeated and 'applauded twenty times over.'

Hence it was, perhaps, that this novice accounted for the best things he said himself; though I must own that the personal knowledge of the lady, which I am favoured with, made it easy to me to lick into shape what the good woman reported to me, as the character given her by the young Levite: For who, even now, in her decline of health, sees not that all these attributes belong to her?

I suppose he has not been long come from college, and now thinks he has nothing to do but to blaze away for a scholar among the *ignorant;* as such young fellows are apt to think those who cannot cap verses with them, and tell us how an antient author expressed himself in Latin on a subject, upon which, however, they may know how, as well as that author, to express themselves in English.

Mrs. Smith was so taken with him, that she would fain have introduced him to the lady, not questioning but it would be very acceptable to her to see one who knew her and her friends so well. But this he declined for several *reasons*, as he call them; which he gave. One was, that persons of his cloth should be very cautious of the *company they were in*, especially where *sex* was concerned, and where a woman had *slurred her reputation*—[I wish I had been there when he gave himself these airs.] Another, that he was desired to inform himself of her present way of life, and who her visiters were; for, as to the praises Mrs. Smith gave the lady, he hinted, that *she* seemed to be a good-natured woman, and might (though for the lady's sake he hoped not) be too partial and short-sighted to be trusted to, absolutely, in a concern of so high a nature as he intimated the task was which he had undertaken; nodding out words of doubtful import, and assuming airs of great significance (as I could gather) throughout the whole conversation. And when Mrs. Smith told him that the lady was in a very bad state of health, he gave a careless shrug—She may be very ill, says he: her disappointments must have touched her to the quick: but she is not bad enough, I dare say, yet, to atone for her very great lapse, and to expect to be forgiven by those whom she has so much disgraced.

A starched, conceited coxcomb! what would I give he had fallen in my way!

He departed, highly satisfied with himself, no doubt, and assured of Mrs. Smith's great opinion of his sagacity and learning: but bid her not say any thing to the lady about him or his inquiries. And I, for very different reasons, enjoined the same thing.

I am glad, however, for her peace of mind's sake, that they begin to think it behoves them to inquire about her.

LETTER XXXIX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday, Aug. 11.

[MR. Belford acquaints his friend with the generosity of Lord M. and the Ladies of his family; and with the Lady's grateful sentiments upon the occasion.

He says, that in hopes to avoid the pain of seeing *him*, (Mr. Lovelace,) she intends to answer his letter of the 7th, though much against her inclination.]

'SHE took great notice,' says Mr. Belford, 'of that pas-
'sage in your's, which makes necessary to the *Divine*
'pardon, the forgiveness of a person causelessly injured.

'Her grandfather, I find, has enabled her at eighteen
'years of age to make her will, and to devise great part of
'his estate to whom she pleases of the family, and the rest
'out of it (if she die single) at her own discretion; and
'this to create respect to her! as he apprehended that

'she would be envied: and she now resolves to set about 'making her will out of hand.'

[Mr. Belford insists upon the promise he had made him, not to molest the Lady: and gives him the contents of her answer to Lord M. and the Ladies of his Lordship's family, declining their generous offers. See Letter XXXVII. of this volume.]

LETTER LX.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday, Aug. 11.

It is a cruel alternative to be either forced to see you, or to write to you. But a will of my own has been long denied me; and to avoid a greater evil, nay, now I may say, the greatest, I write.

Were I capable of disguising or concealing my real sentiments, I might safely, I dare say, give you the remote hope you request, and yet keep all my resolutions. But I must tell you, Sir, (it becomes my character to tell you,) that, were I to live more years than perhaps I may weeks, and there were not another man in the world, I could not, I would not, be your's.

There is no *merit* in performing a *duty*.

Religion enjoins me not only to forgive injuries, but to return good for evil. It is all my consolation, and I bless God for giving me that, that I am now in such a state of mind, with regard to you, that I can cheerfully obey its dictates. And accordingly I tell you, that, wherever you

go, I wish you happy. And in this I mean to include every good wish.

And now having, with great reluctance I own, complied with one of your compulsatory alternatives, I expect the fruits of it.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXI.

MR. JOHN HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's to her mother. See Letter* XXXII. *of this volume.*]

Monday, Aug. 7.

POOR UNGRATEFUL, NAUGHTY KINSWOMAN!

YOUR mother neither caring, nor being *permitted*, to write, I am desired to set pen to paper, though I had resolved against it.

And so I am to tell you, that your letters, joined to the occasion of them, almost break the hearts of us all.

Were we sure you had seen your folly, and were *truly* penitent, and, at the same time, that you were so very ill as you pretend, I know not what might be done for you. But we are all acquainted with your moving ways when you want to carry a point.

Unhappy girl! how miserable have you made us all! We, who used to visit with so much pleasure, now cannot endure to look upon one another.

If you had not known, upon an hundred occasions, how dear you once was to us, you might judge of it now,

were you to know how much your folly has unhinged us all.

Naughty, naughty girl! You see the fruits of preferring a rake and libertine to a man of sobriety and morals, against full warning, against better knowledge. And such a modest creature, too, as you were! How could you think of such an unworthy preference?

Your mother *can't* ask, and your sister knows not in modesty *how* to ask; and so *I* ask you, if you have any reason to think yourself with child by this villain?—You *must* answer this, and answer it truly, before any thing can be resolved upon about you.

You may well be touched with a deep remorse for your misdeeds. Could I ever have thought that my doting-piece, as every one called you, would have done thus? To be sure I loved you too well. But that is over now. Yet, though I will not pretend to answer for any body but myself, for my own part I say God forgive you! and this is all from

Your afflicted uncle,

JOHN HARLOWE.

The following MEDITATION *was stitched to the bottom of this letter with black silk.*

MEDITATION.

O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave! that thou wouldst keep me secret, till thy wrath be past!

My face is foul with weeping; and on my eye-lid is the shadow of death.

My friends scorn me; but my mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

A dreadful sound is in my ears; in prosperity the destroyer came upon me!

I have sinned! what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men! why hast thou set me as a mark against thee; so that I am a burden to myself!

When I say my bed shall comfort me; my couch shall ease my complaint;

Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.

So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life.

I loath it! I would not live alway!—Let me alone; for my days are vanity!

He hath made me a bye-word of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness.

And where now is my hope?—

Yet all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

LETTER XLII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO JOHN HARLOWE, ESQ.

HONOURED SIR, Thursday, Aug. 10.

It was an act of charity I begged: only for a last blessing, that I might die in peace. I ask not to be received again, as my severe sister [Oh! that I had not written to her!] is pleased to say, is my view. Let that grace be denied me when I do.

I could not look forward to my last scene with comfort, without seeking, at least, to obtain the blessing I petitioned for; and that with a contrition so deep, that I deserved not, were it known, to be turned over from the tender nature of a mother, to the upbraiding pen of an uncle! and to be wounded by a cruel question, put by him in a shocking manner: and which a little, a very little time, will better answer than I can: for I am not either a hardened or shameless creature: if I were, I should not have been so solicitous to obtain the favour I sued for.

And permit me to say that I asked it as well for my father and mother's sake, as for my own; for I am sure *they* at least will be uneasy, after I am gone, that they refused it to me.

I should still be glad to have theirs, and your's, Sir, and all your blessings, and your prayers: but, denied in such a manner, I will not presume again to ask it: relying entirely on the Almighty's; which is never denied, when supplicated for with such true penitence as I hope mine is.

God preserve my dear uncle, and all my honoured friends! prays

Your unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLIII.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, Monday, Aug. 7.

MY DEAREST CREATURE,

I CAN write but just now a few lines. I cannot tell how to bear the *sound* of that Mr. Belford for your executor, cogent as your reasons for that measure are: and yet I am firmly of opinion, that none of your relations should be named for the trust. But I dwell the less upon this subject, as I hope (and cannot bear to apprehend the contrary) that you will still live many, many years.

Mr. Hickman, indeed, speaks very handsomely of Mr. Belford. But he, poor man! has not much penetration. —If he had, he would hardly think so well of *me* as he does.

I have a particular opportunity of sending this by a friend of my aunt Harman's; who is ready to set out for London, (and this occasions my hurry,) and is to return out of hand. I expect, therefore, by him a large packet from you; and hope and long for news of your amended health: which Heaven grant to the prayers of

Your ever-affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

Friday, Aug. 11.

I WILL send you a large packet, as you desire and expect; since I can do it by so safe a conveyance: but not all that is come to my hand—for I must own that my friends are very severe; too severe for any body, who loves them not, to see their letters. You, my dear, would not call them my *friends*, you said, long ago; but my *relations*: indeed I cannot call them my *relations*, I think!——But I am ill; and therefore perhaps more peevish than I should be. It is difficult to go out of ourselves to give a judgment against ourselves; and yet, oftentimes, to pass a *just* judgment, we ought.

I thought I should alarm you in the choice of my executor. But the sad necessity I am reduced to must excuse me.

I shall not repeat any thing I have said before on that subject: but if your objections will not be answered to your satisfaction by the papers and letters I shall enclose, marked 1, 2, 3, 4, to 9, I must think myself in another instance unhappy; since I am engaged too far (and with my own judgment too) to recede.

As Mr. Belford has transcribed for me, in confidence, from his friend's letters, the passages which accompany this, I must insist that you suffer no soul but yourself to peruse them; and that you return them by the very first opportunity; that so no use may be made of them that may do hurt either to the original writer or to the communicator. You'll observe I am bound by promise to this

care. If through my means any mischief should arise, between this *humane* and that *inhuman* libertine, I should think myself utterly inexcusable.

I subjoin a list of the papers or letters I shall enclose. You must return them all when perused*.

I am very much tired and fatigued—with—I don't know what—with writing, I think—but most with myself, and with a situation I cannot help aspiring to get out of, and above!

O my dear, the world we live in is a sad, a very sad world!——While under our parents protecting wings, we know nothing at all of it. Book-learned and a scribbler, and looking at people as I saw them as visiters or visiting, I thought I knew a great deal of it. Pitiable ignorance!—Alas! I knew nothing at all!

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* 1. A letter from Miss Montague, dated . . . . . Aug. 1.
2. A copy of my answer . . . . . Aug. 3.
3. Mr. Belford's Letter to me, which will show you what my request was to him, and his compliance with it; and the desired extracts from his friend's letters . . . . . Aug. 3, 4.
4. A copy of my answer, with thanks; and requesting him to undertake the executorship Aug. 4.
5. Mr. Belford's acceptance of the trust . . . . . Aug. 4.
6. Miss Montague's letter, with a generous offer from Lord M. and the Ladies of that family Aug. 7.
7. Mr. Lovelace's to me . . . . . Aug. 7.
8. Copy of mine to Miss Montague, in answer to her's of the day before . . . . . Aug. 8.
9. Copy of my answer to Mr. Lovelace . . . . . Aug. 11.

You will see by these several Letters, written and received in so little a space of time, (to say nothing of what I have received and written which I *cannot* show you,) how little opportunity or leisure I can have for writing my own story.

With zealous wishes for your happiness, and the happiness of every one dear to you, I am, and will ever be,

Your gratefully-affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XLV.

MR. ANTONY HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

[*In reply to her's to her uncle Harlowe, of Thursday, Aug.* 10.]

UNHAPPY GIRL! Aug. 12.

As your uncle Harlowe chooses not to answer your pert letter to him; and as mine, written to you before*, was written as if it were in the spirit of prophecy, as you have found to your sorrow; and as you are now making yourself worse than you are in your health, and better than you are in your penitence, *as we are very well assured*, in order to move compassion; which you do not deserve, having had so much warning: for all these reasons, I take up my pen once more; though I had told your *brother, at his going to Edinburgh*, that I would not write to you, even were you to write to me, without letting him know. So indeed *had we all;* for he prognosticated what would happen, as to your applying to us, when you knew not how to help it.

Brother John has hurt your niceness, it seems, by asking you a plain question, which your mother's heart is too

* See Vol. I. Letter XXXII.

full of grief to let her ask; and modesty will not let your sister ask; though but the consequence of your actions—and yet it *must* be answered, before you'll obtain from your father and mother, and us, the notice you hope for, I can tell you that.

You lived several guilty weeks with one of the vilest fellows that ever drew breath, at bed, as well as board, no doubt, (for is not his character known?) and pray don't be ashamed to be asked after what may naturally come of such free living. This modesty indeed would have become you for eighteen years of your life—you'll be pleased to mark that—but makes no good figure compared with your behaviour since the beginning of April last. So pray don't take it up, and wipe your mouth upon it, as if nothing had happened.

But, may be, I likewise am too shocking to your niceness!—O girl, girl! your modesty had better been shown at the right time and place!—Every body but you believed what the rake was: but you would believe nothing bad of him—What think you now?

Your folly has ruined all our peace. And who knows where it may yet end?—Your poor father but yesterday showed me this text: With bitter grief he showed it me, poor man! and do you lay it to your heart:

'A father waketh for his daughter, when no man 'knoweth; and the care for her taketh away his sleep—'When she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her 'age—[*and you know what proposals were made to you 'at different times.*] And, being married, lest she should 'be hated. In her virginity, lest she should be defiled, and 'gotten with child in her father's house—[*I don't make 'the words, mind that.*] And, having an husband, lest 'she should misbehave herself.' *And what follows?*

'Keep a sure watch over a shameless daughter—*yet no 'watch could hold you!*] lest she make thee a laughing 'stock to thine enemies—[*as you have made us all to 'this cursed Lovelace*, and a bye-word in the city, and 'a reproach among the people, and make thee ashamed 'before the multitude.' *Ecclus.* xlii. 9, 10, &c.

Now will you wish you had not written pertly. Your sister's severities!—Never, girl, say that is *severe* that is *deserved.* You know the meaning of words. No body better. Would to the Lord you had acted up but to one half of what you know! then had we not been disappointed and grieved, as we all have been: and nobody more than him who was

Your loving uncle,
ANTONY HARLOWE.

This will be with you to-morrow. Perhaps you may be suffered to have some part of your estate, after you have smarted a little more. Your pertly-answered uncle John, who is your trustee, will not have you be destitute. But we hope all is not true *that we hear of you.* —Only take care, I advise you, that, bad as you have acted, you act not still worse, if it be possible to act worse. *Improve upon the hint.*

LETTER XLVI.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO ANTONY HARLOWE, ESQ.

HONOURED SIR, Sunday, Aug. 13.

I AM very sorry for my pert letter to my uncle Harlowe. Yet I did not intend it to be pert. People *new* to misfortune may be too easily moved to impatience.

The fall of a regular person, no doubt, is dreadful and inexcusable. It is like the sin of apostacy. Would to Heaven, however, that I had had the circumstances of mine inquired into!

If, Sir, I make myself worse than I am in my health, and better than I am in my penitence, it is fit I should be punished for my double dissimulation: and *you* have the pleasure of being one of my punishers. My sincerity in both respects will, however, be best justified by the event. To *that* I refer.—May Heaven give you always as much comfort in reflecting upon the reprobation I have met with, as you seem to have pleasure in mortifying a poor creature, *extremely* mortified; and that from a *right* sense, as she presumes to hope, of her own fault!

What you have *heard of me* I cannot tell. When the nearest and dearest relations give up an unhappy wretch, it is not to be wondered at that those who are *not* related to her are ready to take up and propagate slanders against her. Yet I think I may defy calumny itself, and (excepting the fatal, though involuntary step of *April* 10) wrap myself in my own innocence, and be easy. I thank you, Sir, nevertheless, for your *caution*, mean it what it will.

As to the question required of me to answer, and which

is allowed to be too shocking either for a mother to put to a daughter, or a sister to a sister; and which, however, *you* say I *must* answer;—O Sir!—And *must* I answer?—This then be my answer:—'A *little* time, a much *less* 'time than is imagined, will afford a more satisfactory an-'swer to my whole family, and even to my *brother* and 'sister, than I can give in words.'

Nevertheless, be pleased to let it be remembered, that I did not petition for a restoration to favour. I could not hope for that. Nor yet to be put in possession of any part of my own estate. Nor even for means of necessary subsistence from the produce of that estate—but only for a blessing; for a *last* blessing!

And this I will farther add, because it is *true*, that I have no wilful crime to charge against myself: no free living at bed and at board, as you phrase it!

Why, why, Sir, were not *other* inquiries made of me, as well as this shocking one?—inquiries that modesty *would* have permitted a mother or a sister to make; and which, if I may be excused to say so, would have been still *less* improper, and *more* charitable, to have been made by *uncles*, (were the mother *forbidden*, or the sister *not inclined*, to make them,) than those they have made.

Although my humble application has brought upon me so much severe reproach, I repent not that I have written to my mother, (although I cannot but wish that I had not written to my sister;) because I have satisfied a dutiful consciousness by it, however unanswered by the wished-for success. Nevertheless, I cannot help saying, that mine is indeed a hard fate, that I cannot beg pardon for my capital errors without doing it in such terms as shall be an aggravation of the offence.

But I had best leave off, lest, as my full mind, I find, is

rising to my pen, I have other pardons to beg as I multiply lines, where none at all will be given.

God Almighty bless, preserve, and comfort my dear sorrowing and grievously offended father and mother!—and continue in honour, favour, and merit, my happy sister!—May God forgive my brother, and protect him from the violence of his own temper, as well as from the destroyer of his sister's honour!—And may you, my dear uncle, and your no less now than ever dear brother, my second papa, as he used to bid me call him, be blessed and happy in them, and in each other!—And, in order to this, may you all speedily banish from your remembrance, for ever,

The unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE!

LETTER XLVII.

MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Monday, Aug. 14.

All your friends here, my dear young lady, now seem set upon proposing to you to go to one of the plantations. This, I believe, is owing to some misrepresentations of Mr. Brand; from whom they have received a letter.

I wish, with all my heart, that you could, consistently with your own notions of honour, yield to the pressing requests of all Mr. Lovelace's family in his behalf. This, I think, would stop every mouth; and, in time, reconcile every body to you. For your own friends will not believe that he is in earnest to marry you; and the hatred be-

tween the families is such, that they will not condescend to inform themselves better; nor would believe *him*, if he were ever so solemnly to avow that he is.

I should be very glad to have in readiness, upon occasion, some brief particulars of your sad story under your own hand. But let me tell you, at the same time, that no misrepresentations, nor even your own confession, shall lessen my opinion either of your piety, or of your prudence in essential points; because I know it was always your humble way to make light faults heavy against yourself: and well might you, my dearest young lady, aggravate your own failings, who have ever had so few; and those few so slight, that your ingenuousness has turned most of them into excellencies.

Nevertheless, let me advise you, my dear Miss Clary, to discountenance any visits, which, with the censorious, may affect your character. As *that* has not hitherto suffered by your *wilful* default, I hope you will not, in a desponding negligence (satisfying yourself with a consciousness of your own innocence) permit it to suffer. Difficult situations, you know, my dear young lady, are the tests not only of prudence but of virtue.

I think, I *must* own to you, that, since Mr. Brand's letter has been received, I have a renewed prohibition to attend you. However, if you will give me leave, that shall not detain me from you. Nor would I stay for that leave, if I were not in hopes that, in this critical situation, I may be able to do you service here.

I have often had messages and inquiries after your health from the truly-reverend Dr. Lewen, who has always expressed, and still expresses, infinite concern for you. He entirely disapproves of the measures of the family with re-

gard to you. He is too much indisposed to go abroad. But, were he in good health, he would not, as I understand, visit at Harlowe-place; having some time since been unhandsomely treated by your brother, on his offering to mediate for you with your family.

I AM just now informed that your cousin Morden is arrived in England. He is at Canterbury, it seems, looking after some concerns he has there; and is soon expected in these parts. Who knows what may arise from his arrival. God be with you, my dearest Miss Clary, and be your comforter and sustainer. And never fear but He will; for I am sure, I am very sure, that you put your whole trust in Him.

And what, after all, is this world, on which we so much depend for durable good, poor creatures that we are!—When all the joys of it, and (what is a balancing comfort) all the *troubles* of it, are but momentary, and vanish like a morning dream!

And be this remembered, my dearest young lady, that worldly joy claims no kindred with the joys we are bid to aspire after. These latter we must be fitted for by affliction and disappointment. You are therefore in the direct road to glory, however thorny the path you are in. And I had almost said, that it depends upon yourself, by your patience, and by your resignedness to the dispensation, (God enabling you, who never fails the true penitent, and sincere invoker,) to be an heir of a blessed immortality.

But this glory, I humbly pray, that you may not be permitted to enter into, ripe as you are so soon likely to be for it, till, with your gentle hand, (a pleasure I have so

often, as you know, promised to myself,) you have closed the eyes of

Your maternally-affectionate
JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER XLVIII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MRS. NORTON.

Thursday, Aug. 27.

WHAT Mr. Brand, or any body, can have written or said to my prejudice, I cannot imagine; and yet some evil reports have gone out against me; as I find by some hints in a very severe letter written to me by my uncle Antony. Such a letter as I believe was never written to any poor creature, who, by ill health of body, as well as of mind, was before tottering on the brink of the grave. But my friends may possibly be better justified than the reporters —For who knows what they may have heard?

You give me a kind caution, which seems to imply *more* than you express, when you advise me against countenancing visiters that may discredit me. You should, in so tender a point, my dear Mrs. Norton, have spoken quite out. Surely, I have had afflictions enow to strengthen my mind, and to enable it to bear the worst that can now happen. But I will not puzzle myself by *conjectural evils;* as I *might* perhaps do, if I had not enow that were *certain.* I shall hear all, when it is thought proper that I should. Mean time, let me say, for *your* satisfaction, that I know not that I have any thing criminal or disreputable

to answer for either in word or deed, since the fatal 10th of April last.

You desire an account of what passes between me and my friends; and also particulars or brief heads of my sad story, in order to serve me as occasions shall offer. My dear good Mrs. Norton, you shall have a whole packet of papers, which I have sent to my Miss Howe, when she returns them; and you shall have likewise another packet, (and that with this letter,) which I cannot at present think of sending to that dear friend for the sake of my *own relations;* whom, without seeing that packet, she is but too ready to censure heavily. From these you will be able to collect a great deal of my story. But for what is previous to these papers, and which more particularly relates to what I have suffered from Mr. Lovelace, you must have patience; for at present I have neither head nor heart for such subjects. The papers I send you with this will be those mentioned in the margin*. You must restore them to me as soon as perused; and upon your honour make no use of them, or of any intelligence you have from me, but by my previous consent.

These communications you must not, my good Mrs. Norton, look upon as appeals against my relations. On

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* 1. A copy of mine to my sister, begging off my father's malediction . . . . . dated July 21.
2. My sister's answer . . . . . dated July 27.
3. Copy of my second letter to my sister . . dated July 29.
4. My sister's answer . . . . . dated Aug. 3.
5. Copy of my Letter to my mother . . . . dated Aug. 5.
6. My uncle Harlowe's letter . . . . . dated Aug. 7.
7. Copy of my answer to it . . . . . dated the 10th.
8. Letter from my uncle Antony . . . . . dated the 12th.
9. And lastly, the copy of my answer to it . dated the 13th.

the contrary, I am heartily sorry that they have incurred the displeasure of so excellent a divine as Dr. Lewen. But you desire to have every thing before you: and I think you *ought;* for who knows, as you say, but you may be applied to at last to administer comfort from their conceding hearts, to one that wants it; and who sometimes, judging by what she knows of her own heart, thinks herself entitled to it?

I know that I have a most indulgent and sweet-tempered mother; but, having to deal with violent spirits, she has too often forfeited that peace of mind which she so much prefers, by her over concern to preserve it.

I am sure she would not have turned me over for an answer to a letter written with so contrite and fervent a spirit, as was mine to her, to a *masculine* spirit, had she been left to herself.

But, my dear Mrs. Norton, might not, think you, the revered lady have favoured me with one *private* line? —— If not, might not *you* have written by her order, or connivance, one softening, one *motherly* line, when she saw her poor girl, whom once she dearly loved, borne so hard upon?

O no, she might not!—because her heart, to be sure, is in their measures!—and if *she* think them right, perhaps they *must be right!*—at least, knowing only what *they* know, they must!—and yet they *might* know all, if they would!—and possibly, in their own good time, they think to make proper inquiry.—My application was made to them but *lately*.—Yet how deeply will it afflict them, if *their* time should be *out of time!*

When you have before you the letters I have sent to Miss Howe, you will see that Lord M. and the Ladies of his family, jealous as they are of the honour of *their house*, (to express myself in their language,) think better of me

than my own relations do. You will see an instance of their generosity to me, which at the time extremely affected me, and indeed still affects me. Unhappy man! gay, inconsiderate, and cruel! what has been his gain by making unhappy a creature who hoped to make him happy! and who was determined to deserve the love of all to whom he is related!—Poor man!—but you will mistake a compassionate and placable nature for love!—he took care, great care, that I should rein in betimes any passion that I might have had for him, had he known how to be but commonly grateful or generous!—But the Almighty knows what is best for his poor creatures.

Some of the letters in the same packet will also let you into the knowledge of a strange step which I have taken, (strange you will think it); and, at the same time, give you my reasons for taking it*.

It must be expected, that situations uncommonly difficult will make necessary some extraordinary steps, which, but for those situations, would be hardly excusable. It will be very happy indeed, and somewhat wonderful, if all the measures I have been driven to take should be right. A pure intention, void of all undutiful resentment, is what must be my consolation, whatever others may think of those measures, when they come to know them: which, however, will hardly be till it is out of my power to justify them, or to answer for myself.

I am glad to hear of my cousin Morden's safe arrival. I should wish to see him methinks: but I am afraid that he will sail with the stream; as it must be expected, that he will hear what they have to say first.—But what I most fear is, that he will take upon himself to avenge me. Ra-

* She means that of making Mr. Belford her executor.

ther than he should do so, I would have him look upon me as a creature utterly unworthy of his concern; at least of his *vindictive* concern.

How soothing to the wounded heart of your Clarissa, how balmy are the assurances of your continued love and favour;—love me, my dear mamma Norton, continue to love me, to the end!—I now think that I may, without presumption, promise to *deserve* your love to the end. And, when I am gone, cherish my memory in your worthy heart; for in so doing you will cherish the memory of one who loves and honours you more than she can express.

But when I am no more, get over, I charge you, as soon as you can, the smarting pangs of grief that will attend a recent loss; and let all be early turned into that sweetly melancholy regard to MEMORY, which, engaging us to forget all faults, and to remember nothing but what was thought amiable, gives more pleasure than pain to survivors—especially if they can comfort themselves with the humble hope, that the Divine mercy has taken the dear departed to itself.

And what is the space of time to look backward upon, between an early departure and the longest survivance!—and what the consolation attending the sweet hope of meeting again, never more to be separated, never more to be pained, grieved, or aspersed;—but mutually blessing, and being blessed, to all eternity!

In the contemplation of this happy state, in which I hope, in God's good time, to rejoice with you, my beloved Mrs. Norton, and also with my dear relations, all reconciled to, and blessing the child against whom they are now so much incensed, I conclude myself

Your ever dutiful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XLIX.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Sunday, Aug. 13.

I DON'T know what a devil ails me; but I never was so much indisposed in my life. At first, I thought some of my blessed relations here had got a dose administered to me, in order to get the whole house to themselves. But, as I am the hopes of the family, I believe they would not be so wicked.

I must lay down my pen. I cannot write with any spirit at all. What a plague can be the matter with me!

LORD M. paid me just now a cursed gloomy visit, to ask how I do after bleeding. His sisters both drove away yesterday, God be thanked. But they asked not my leave; and hardly bid me good-bye. My Lord was more tender, and more dutiful, than I expected. Men are less unforgiving than women. I have reason to say so, I am sure. For, besides implacable Miss Harlowe, and the old Ladies, the two Montague apes han't been near me yet.

NEITHER eat, drink, nor sleep!—a piteous case, Jack! If I should die like a fool now, people would say Miss Harlowe had broken my heart.—That she *vexes* me to the heart, is certain.

Confounded squeamish! I would fain write it off. But must lay down my pen again. It won't do. Poor Lovelace!——What a devil ails thee?

WELL, but now let's try for't—Hoy—Hoy—Hoy!

Confound me for a gaping puppy, how I yawn!—Where shall I begin? at thy executorship—thou shalt have a double office of it: for I really think thou mayst send me a coffin and a shroud. I shall be ready for them by the time they can come down.

What a little fool is this Miss Harlowe! I warrant she'll now repent that she refused me. Such a lovely young widow—What a charming widow would she have made! how would she have adorned the weeds! to be a widow in the first twelve months is one of the greatest felicities that can befal a fine woman. Such pretty employment in *new dismals*, when she had hardly worn round her *blazing joyfuls!* Such lights, and such shades! how would they set off one another, and be adorned by the wearer!—

Go to the devil!—I *will* write!—Can I do any thing else?

They would not have me write, Belford.—I must be ill indeed, when I can't write.—

But thou seemest nettled, Jack! Is it because I was stung? It is not for two friends, any more than for man and wife, to be out of patience at one time.—What must be the consequence if they are?—I am in no fighting mood just now: but as patient and passive as the chickens that are brought me in broth—for I am come to that already.

But I can tell thee, for all this, be *thy own man*, if thou wilt, as to the executorship, I will never suffer thee to expose my letters. They are too ingenuous by half to be seen. And I absolutely insist upon it, that, on receipt of this, thou burn them all.

I will never forgive thee that impudent and unfriendly reflection, of my *cavaliering* it here over half a dozen

persons of distinction: remember, too, thy words *poor helpless orphan*—these reflections are too serious, and thou art also too serious, for me to let these things go off as jesting; notwithstanding the Roman style* is preserved; and, indeed, but just preserved. But my soul, Jack, if I had not been taken thus egregiously cropsick, I would have been up with thee, and the lady too, before now.

But write on, however: and send me copies, if thou canst, of all that passes between our Charlotte and Miss Harlowe. I'll take no notice of what thou communicatest of that sort. I like not the *people here* the worse for their generous offer to the lady. But you see she is as proud as implacable. There's no obliging her. She'd rather sell her clothes than be beholden to any body, although she would oblige by permitting the obligation.

O Lord! O Lord!—Mortal ill!—Adieu, Jack!

I was forced to leave off, I was so ill, at this place. And what dost think! why Lord M. brought the parson of the parish to pray by me; for his chaplain is at Oxford. I was lain down in my night-gown over my waistcoat, and in a doze: and, when I opened my eyes, who should I see, but the parson kneeling on one side the bed; Lord M. on the other; Mrs. Greme, who had been sent for to *tend me*, as they call it, at the feet? God be thanked, my Lord, said I in an ecstasy!—Where's Miss?—for I supposed they were going to marry me.

They thought me delirious, at first; and prayed louder and louder.

This roused me: off the bed I started; slid my feet into

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* For what these gentlemen mean by the Roman style, see Vol. I. page 215, in the note.

my slippers; put my hand in my waistcoat pocket, and pulled out thy letter with my beloved's meditation in it: My Lord, Dr. Wright, Mrs. Greme, you have thought me a very wicked fellow: but, see! I can read you as good as you can read me.

They stared at one another. I gaped, and read, Poor mo—or—tals the cau—o—ause of their own—their own mis—ser—ry.

It is as suitable to my case, as to the lady's, as thou'lt observe, if thou readest it again*. At the passage where it is said, That *when a man is chastened for sin, his beauty consumes away*, I stept to the glass: A poor figure, by Jupiter, cried I!—And they all praised and admired me; lifted up their hands and their eyes; and the doctor said, he always thought it impossible, that a man of my sense could be so wild as the world said I was. My Lord chuckled for joy; congratulated me; and, thank my dear Miss Harlowe, I got high reputation among good, bad, and indifferent. In short, I have established myself for ever with all here.—But, O Belford, even this will not do! —I must leave off again.

A visit from the Montague sisters, led in by the hobbling Peer, to congratulate my amendment and reformation both in one. What a lucky event this illness with this meditation in my pocket; for we were all to pieces before! Thus, when a boy, have I joined with a crowd coming out of church, and have been thought to have been there myself.

I am incensed at the insolence of the young Levite. Thou wilt highly oblige me, if thou'lt find him out, and send me his ears in the next letter.

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* See Letter XXX. of this volume.

My beloved mistakes me, if she thinks I proposed her writing to me as an alternative that should dispense with my attendance upon her. That it shall *not* do, nor did I intend it should, unless she had pleased me better in the contents of her letter than she has done. Bid her read again. I gave no such hopes. I would have been with her in spite of you both, by to-morrow, at farthest, had I not been laid by the heels thus, like a helpless miscreant.

But I grow better and better every hour, *I* say: the *doctor* says not: but I am sure I know best: and I will soon be in London, depend on't. But say nothing of this to my dear, cruel, and implacable Miss Harlowe.

A—dieu—u, Ja—aack—What a gaping puppy (yaw—n! yaw—n! yaw—n!)

Thy

LOVELACE!

LETTER L.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Monday, Aug 14.

I AM extremely concerned for thy illness. I should be very sorry to lose thee. Yet, if thou diest so soon, I could wish, from my soul, it had been before the beginning of last April: and this as well for thy sake, as for the sake of the most excellent woman in the world: for then thou wouldst not have had the most crying sin of thy life to answer for.

I was told on Saturday that thou wert very much out of order; and this made me forbear writing till I heard

farther. Harry, on this return from thee, confirmed the bad way thou art in. But I hope Lord M. in his unmerited tenderness for thee, thinks the worst of thee. What can it be, Bob.? A violent fever, they say; but attended with odd and severe symptoms.

I will not trouble thee in the way thou art in, with what passes here with Miss Harlowe. I wish thy repentance as swift as thy illness; and as efficacious, if thou diest; for it is else to be feared, that she and you will never meet in one place.

I told her how ill you are. Poor man! said she. *Dangerously* ill, say you?

Dangerously *indeed*, Madam!—So Lord M. sends me word!

God be merciful to him, if he die!—said the admirable creature.—Then, after a pause, Poor wretch!—may he meet with the mercy he has not shown!

I send this by a special messenger: for I am impatient to hear how it goes with thee.—If I have received thy *last* letter, what melancholy reflections will that *last*, so full of shocking levity, give to

Thy true friend,

JOHN BELFORD.

LETTER LI.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday, Aug. 15.

THANK thee, Jack; most heartily I thank thee, for the sober conclusion of thy last!—I have a good mind, for the

sake of it, to forgive thy till now absolutely unpardonable extracts.

But dost think I will lose such an angel, such a *forgiving* angel, as this?—By my soul, I will not!—To pray for mercy for such an ungrateful miscreant!—how she wounds me, how she cuts me to the soul, by her exalted generosity!—But SHE must have mercy upon me first!—then will she teach me a reliance for the sake of which her prayer for me will be answered.

But hasten, hasten to me particulars of her health, of her employments, of her conversation.

I am sick only of love! Oh! that I could have called her mine!—it would then have been worth while to be sick!—to have sent for her down to me from town; and to have had her, with healing in her dove-like wings, flying to my comfort; her duty and her choice to pray for me, and to bid me live for her sake!—O Jack! what an angel have I—

But I *have not* lost her!—I *will not* lose her! I am almost well; should be quite well but for these prescribing rascals, who, to do credit to their skill, will make the disease of importance.—And I will make her mine!—and be sick again, to entitle myself to her *dutiful* tenderness, and *pious* as well as *personal* concern!

God for ever bless her!—Hasten, hasten particulars of her!—I am sick of love!—such generous goodness!—By all that's great and good, I will not lose her!—so tell her!—She says, that she could not pity me, if she thought of being mine! This, according to Miss Howe's transcriptions to Charlotte.—But bid her hate me, and have me: and my behaviour to her shall soon turn that hate to love! for, body and mind, I will be wholly her's.

LETTER LII.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday, Aug. 17.

I AM sincerely rejoiced to hear that thou art already so much amended, as thy servant tells me thou art. Thy letter looks as if thy morals were mending with thy health. This was a letter I *could* show, as I *did*, to the lady.

She is very ill: (cursed letters received from her implacable family!) so I could not have much conversation with her, in thy favour, upon it.—But what passed will make thee more and more adore her.

She was very attentive to me, as I read it; and, when I had done, Poor man! said she; what a letter is this! He had timely instances that my temper was not ungenerous, if generosity could have obliged him! But his remorse, and that for *his own* sake, is all the punishment I wish him.—Yet I must be more reserved, if you write to him every thing I say!

I extolled her unbounded goodness—how could I help it, though to her face!

No goodness in it! she said—it was a frame of mind she had endeavoured after for *her own sake*. She suffered too much in want of mercy, not to wish it to a penitent heart. He *seems* to be penitent, said she; and it is not for me to judge beyond appearances.—If he be not, he deceives himself more than any body else.

She was so ill that this was all that passed on the occasion.

What a fine subject for tragedy, would the injuries of this lady, and her behaviour under them, both with regard

to her implacable friends, and to her persecutor, make! With a grand objection as to the moral, nevertheless*; for here virtue is punished! Except indeed we look forward to the rewards of HEREAFTER, which, morally, *she* must be sure of, or who can? Yet, after all, I know not, so sad a fellow art thou, and so vile an husband mightest thou have made, whether her virtue is not rewarded in missing thee: for things the most grievous to human nature, when they happen, as this charming creature once observed, are often the happiest for us in the event.

I have frequently thought, in my attendance on this lady, that if Belton's admired author, Nic. Rowe, had had such a character before him. he would have drawn another sort of a penitent than he *has* done, or given his play, which he calls *The Fair Penitent*, a fitter title. Miss Harlowe is a penitent indeed! I think, if I am not guilty of a contradiction in terms; a penitent without a fault; her parents' conduct towards her from the first considered.

The whole story of the other is a pack of d——d stuff. Lothario, 'tis true, seems such another wicked ungenerous varlet as thou knowest who: the author knew how to draw a rake; but not to paint a penitent. Calista is a

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* Mr. Belford's objection, That virtue ought not to suffer in a tragedy, is not well considered: Monimia in the Orphan, Belvidera in Venice Preserved, Athenais in Theodosius, Cordelia in Shakspeare's King Lear, Desdemona in Othello, Hamlet, (to name no more,) are instances that a tragedy could hardly be justly called a tragedy, if virtue did not temporarily suffer, and vice for a while triumph. But he recovers himself in the same paragraph; and leads us to look up to the FUTURE for the reward of virtue, and for the punishment of guilt: and observes not amiss, when he says, He knows not but that the virtue of such a woman as Clarissa is rewarded in missing such a man as Lovelace.

desiring luscious wench, and her penitence is nothing else but rage, insolence, and scorn. Her passions are all storm and tumult; nothing of the finer passions of the sex, which, if naturally drawn, will distinguish themselves from the masculine passions, by a softness that will even shine through rage and despair. Her character is made up of deceit and disguise. She has no virtue; is all pride; and her devil is as much *within* her, as *without* her.

How then can the fall of such a one create a proper distress, when all the circumstances of it are considered? For does she not brazen out her crime, even after detection? Knowing her own guilt, she calls for Altamont's vengeance on his best friend, as if he had traduced her; yields to marry Altamont, though criminal with another; and actually beds that whining puppy, when she had given up herself, body and soul, to Lothario; who, nevertheless, refused to marry her.

Her penitence, when begun, she justly styles *the phrensy of her soul;* and, as I said, after having, as long as she could, most audaciously brazened out her crime, and done all the mischief she could do, (occasioning the death of Lothario, of her father, and others,) she stabs herself.

And can this be an act of penitence?

But, indeed, our poets hardly know how to create a distress without horror, murder, and suicide; and must shock your soul, to bring tears from your eyes.

Altamont indeed, who is an amorous blockhead, a credulous cuckold, and, (though painted as a brave fellow, and a soldier,) a mere Tom. Essence, and a quarreller with his best friend, dies like a fool, (as we are led to suppose at the conclusion of the play,) without either sword or pop-gun, of mere grief and nonsense, for one

of the vilest of her sex: but the *Fair Penitent*, as she is called, perishes by her own hand; and, having no title by her past crimes to *laudable* pity, forfeits all claim to *true* penitence, and, in all probability, to future mercy.

But here is Miss Clarissa Harlowe, a virtuous, noble, wise, and pious young lady; who being ill used by her friends, and unhappily ensnared by a vile libertine, whom she believes to be a man of honour, is in a manner *forced* to throw herself upon his protection. And he, in order to obtain her confidence, never scruples the deepest and most solemn protestations of honour.

After a series of plots and contrivances, all baffled by her virtue and vigilance, he basely has recourse to the vilest of arts, and, to rob her of her honour, is forced first to rob her of her senses.

Unable to bring her, notwithstanding, to his ungenerous views of cohabitation, she over-awes him in the very entrance of a fresh act of premeditated guilt, in presence of the most abandoned of women assembled to assist his devilish purpose; triumphs over them all, by virtue only of her innocence; and escapes from the vile hands he had put her into.

She nobly, not frantickly, resents: refuses to see or to marry the wretch; who, repenting his usage of so divine a creature, would fain move her to forgive his baseness, and make him her husband: and this, though persecuted by all her friends, and abandoned to the deepest distress, being obliged, from ample fortunes, to make away with her apparel for subsistence; surrounded also by stangers, and forced (in want of others) to make a friend of the friend of her seducer.

Though longing for death, and making all proper preparations for it, convinced that grief and ill usage have

broken her noble heart, she abhors the impious thought of shortening her allotted period; and, as much a stranger to revenge as despair, is able to forgive the author of her ruin; wishes his repentance, and that she may be the last victim to his barbarous perfidy: and is solicitous for nothing so much in this life, as to prevent vindictive mischief *to* and *from* the man who used her so basely.

This is penitence! This is piety! And hence a distress naturally arises, that must *worthily* affect every heart.

Whatever the ill usage of this excellent woman is from her relations, she breaks not out into excesses: she strives, on the contrary, to find reason to justify them at her own expense; and seems more concerned for their cruelty to her for their sakes hereafter, when she shall be no more, than for her own: for, as to herself, she is sure, she says, God will forgive her, though no one on earth will.

On every extraordinary provocation she has recourse to the Scriptures, and endeavours to regulate her vehemence by sacred precedents. 'Better people, she says, have 'been more afflicted than she, grievous as she sometimes 'thinks her afflictions: and shall she not bear what less 'faulty persons have borne?' On the very occasion I have mentioned, (some new instances of implacableness from her friends,) the enclosed meditation will show how mildly, and yet how forcibly, she complains. See if thou, in the wicked levity of thy heart, canst apply it to thy case, as thou didst the other. If thou canst not, give way to thy conscience, and that will make the properest application.

MEDITATION.

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words!

Be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

To her *that is afflicted, pity sould be shown from her friend.*

But she *that is ready to slip with* her *feet, is as a lamp despised in the thought of* them *that are at ease.*

There is a shame which bringeth sin, and there is a shame which bringeth glory and grace.

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me.

If your soul were in my soul's stead, I also could speak as ye do: I could heap up words against you—

But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

Why will ye *break a leaf driven and fro?* Why will ye *pursue thy dry stubble?* Why will ye *write bitter words against me, and make me possess the iniquities of my youth?*

Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought.

Are not my days few? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little—before I go whence I shall not return; even to the land of darkness, and shadow of death!

Let me add, that the excellent lady is informed, by a letter from Mrs. Norton, that Colonel Morden is just arrived in England. He is now the only person she wishes to see.

I expressed some jealousy upon it, lest he should have place given over me in the executorship. She said, That she had no thoughts to do so now; because such a trust,

were he to accept of it, (which she doubted,) might, from the nature of some of the papers which in that case would necessarily pass through his hands, occasion mischiefs between my friend and him, that would be worse than death for her to think of.

Poor Belton, I hear, is at death's door. A messenger is just come from him, who tells me he cannot die till he sees me. I hope the poor fellow will not go off yet; since neither his affairs in this world, nor for the other, are in tolerable order. I cannot avoid going to the poor man. Yet am unwilling to stir, till I have an assurance from you that you will not disturb the lady: for I know he will be very loth to part with me, when he gets me to him.

Tourville tells me how fast thou mendest: let me conjure thee not to think of molesting this incomparable woman. For thy own sake I request this, as well as for her's, and for the sake of thy given promise: for, should she die within a few weeks, as I fear she will, it will be said, and perhaps too justly, that thy visit has hastened her end.

In hopes thou wilt not, I wish thy perfect recovery: else that thou mayest relapse, and be confined to thy bed.

LETTER LIII.

MR. BELFORD, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MADAM, Sat. Morn. Aug. 19.

I THINK myself obliged in honour to acquaint you that I am afraid Mr. Lovelace will try his fate by an interview with you.

I wish to Heaven you could prevail upon yourself to receive his visit. All that is respectful, even to veneration, and all that is penitent, will you see in his behaviour, if you can admit of it. But as I am obliged to set out directly for Epsom, (to perform, as I apprehend, the last friendly offices for poor Mr. Belton, whom once you saw,) and as I think it more likely that Mr. Lovelace will *not* be prevailed upon, than that he *will*, I thought fit to give you this intimation, lest, if he should come, you should be too much surprised.

He flatters himself that you are not so ill as I represent you to be. When he sees you, he will be convinced that the most obliging things he can do, will be as proper to be done for the sake of his own future peace of mind, as for your health-sake; and, I dare say, in fear of hurting the latter, he will forbear the thoughts of any farther intrusion; at least while you are so much indisposed: so that *one half-hour's shock*, if it *will* be a shock to see the unhappy man, (but just got up himself from a dangerous fever,) will be all you will have occasion to stand.

I beg you will not too much hurry and discompose yourself. It is impossible he can be in town till Monday, at soonest. And if he resolve to come, I hope to be at Mr. Smith's before him.

I am, Madam, with the profoundest veneration,

Your most faithful and most obedient servant,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LIV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

[*In answer to his of Aug.* 17. *See Letter* LII. *of this volume.*]

Sunday, Aug. 20.

WHAT an unmerciful fellow art thou! A man has no need of a conscience, who has such an impertinent monitor. But if Nic. Rowe wrote a play that answers not his title, am I to be reflected upon for that?—I have sinned; I repent; I would repair—she forgives my sin: she accepts my repentance: but she won't let me repair—What wouldst have me do?

But get thee gone to Belton, as soon as thou canst. Yet whether thou goest or not, up I *must* go, and see what I can do with the sweet oddity myself. The moment these *prescribing* varlets will let me, depend upon it, I go. Nay, Lord M. thinks she ought to permit me one interview. His opinion has great authority with me—when it squares with my own: and I have assured him, and my two cousins, that I will behave with all the decency and respect that man can behave with to the person whom he *most* respects. And so I will. Of this, if thou choosest not to go to Belton mean time, thou shalt be witness.

Colonel Morden, thou hast heard me say, is a man of honour and bravery:—but Colonel Morden has had his girls, as well as you and I. And indeed, either openly or secretly, who has not? The devil always baits with a pretty wench, when he angles for a man, be his age, rank, or degree, what it will.

I have often heard my beloved speak of the Colonel with

great distinction and esteem. I wish he could make matters a little easier, for her mind's sake, between the rest of the implacables and herself.

Methinks I am sorry for honest Belton. But a man cannot be ill, or vapourish, but thou liftest up thy shriek-owl note, and killest him immediately. None but a fellow, who is fit for a drummer in death's forlorn-hope, could take so much delight, as thou dost, in beating a dead-march with thy goose-quills.

Whereas, didst thou but know thine own talents, thou art formed to give mirth by thy very appearance; and wouldst make a better figure by half, leading up thy brother-bears at Hockley in the Hole, to the music of a Scot's bagpipe. Methinks I see thy clumsy sides shaking, (and shaking the sides of all beholders,) in these attitudes; thy fat head archly beating time on thy porterly shoulders, right and left by turns, as I once beheld thee practising to the horn-pipe at Preston. Thou remembrest the frolick, as I have done an hundred times; for I never before saw thee appear so much in character.

But I know what I shall get by this—only that notable observation repeated, That thy outside is the worst of thee, and mine the best of me. And so let it be. Nothing thou writest of *this sort* can I take amiss.

But I shall call thee seriously to account, when I see thee, for the extracts thou hast given the lady from my letters, notwithstanding what I said in my last; especially if she continue to refuse me. An hundred times have I myself known a woman deny, yet comply at last: but, by these extracts, thou hast, I doubt, made her bar up the door of her heart, as she used to do her chamber-door, against me.—This therefore is a disloyalty that friendship cannot bear, nor honour allow me to forgive.

LETTER LV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

London, Aug. 21. Monday.

I BELIEVE I am bound to curse thee, Jack. Nevertheless I won't anticipate, but proceed to write thee a longer letter than thou hast had from me for some time past. So here goes.

That thou mightest have as little notice as possible of the time I was resolved to be in town, I set out in my Lord's chariot-and-six yesterday, as soon as I had dispatched my letter to thee, and arrived in town last night: for I knew I could have no dependence on thy friendship where Miss Harlowe's humour was concerned.

I had no other place so ready, and so was forced to go to my old lodgings, where also my wardrobe is; and there I poured out millions of curses upon the whole crew, and refused to see either Sally or Polly; and this not only for suffering the lady to escape, but for the villanous arrest, and for their detestable insolence to her at the officer's house.

I dressed myself in a never-worn suit, which I had intended for one of my wedding-suits; and liked myself so well, that I began to think, with thee, that my outside was the best of me:

I took a chair to Smith's, my heart bounding in almost audible thumps to my throat, with the assured expectation of seeing my beloved. I clasped my fingers, as I was danced along: I charged my eyes to languish and sparkle by turns: I talked to my knees, telling them how they

must bend; and, in the language of a charming describer, acted my part in fancy, as well as spoke it to myself.

> Tenderly kneeling, *thus* will I complain:
> *Thus* court her pity; and *thus* plead my pain:
> *Thus* sigh for fancy'd frowns, if frowns should rise;
> And *thus* meet favour in her soft'ning eyes.

In this manner entertained I myself till I arrived at Smith's; and there the fellows set down their gay burden. Off went their hats; Will. ready at hand in a new livery; up went the head; out rushed my honour; the woman behind the counter all in flutters, respect and fear giving due solemnity to her features, and her knees, I doubt not, knocking against the inside of her wainscot-fence.

Your servant, Madam—Will. let the fellows move to some distance, and wait.

You have a young lady lodges here; Miss Harlowe, Madam: Is she above?

Sir, Sir, and please your Honour: [the woman is struck with my figure, thought I:] Miss Harlowe, Sir! There is, indeed, such a young lady lodges here—But, but—

But what, Madam?—I must see her.—One pair of stairs; is it not?—Don't trouble yourself—I shall find her apartment. And was making towards the stairs.

Sir, Sir, the lady, the lady is not at home—she is abroad—she is in the country—

In the country! Not at home!—Impossible! You will not pass this story upon me, good woman. I *must* see her. I have business of life and death with her.

Indeed, Sir, the lady is not at home! Indeed, Sir, she is abroad!—

She then rung a bell: John, cried she, pray step down!—Indeed, Sir, the lady is not at home.

Down came John, the good man of the house, when I expected one of his journeyman, by her saucy familiarity.

My dear, said she, the gentleman will not believe Miss Harlowe is abroad.

John bowed to my fine clothes: Your servant, Sir,—indeed the lady is abroad. She went out of town this morning by six o'clock—into the country—by the doctor's advice.

Still I would not believe either John or his wife. I am sure, said I, she cannot be abroad. I heard she was very ill—she is not able to go out in a coach. Do you know Mr. Belford, friend?

Yes, Sir; I have the honour to know 'Squire Belford. He is gone into the country to visit a sick friend. He went on Saturday, Sir.

This had also been told from thy lodgings to Will. whom I sent to desire to see thee on my first coming to town.

Well, and Mr. Belford wrote me word that she was exceeding ill. How then can she be gone out?

O Sir, she is very ill; very ill, indeed—she could hardly walk to the coach.

Belford, thought I, *himself* knew nothing of the time of my coming; neither can he have received my letter of yesterday: and so ill, 'tis impossible she would go out.

Where is her servant? Call her servant to me.

Her servant, Sir, is her nurse: she has no other. And *she* is gone with her.

Well, friend, I must not believe you. You'll excuse me; but I must go up stairs myself. And was stepping up.

John hereupon put on a serious, and a less respectful face—Sir, this house is mine; and—

And what, friend? not doubting then but she was

above.—I must and will see her. I have authority for it. I am a justice of peace. I have a search warrant.

And up I went; they following me, muttering, and in a plaguy flutter.

The first door I came to was locked. I tapped at it.

The lady, Sir, has the key of her own apartment.

On the inside, I question not, my honest friend; tapping again. And being assured, if she heard my voice, that her timorous and soft temper would make her betray herself, by some flutters, to my listning ear, I said aloud, I am confident Miss Harlowe is here: dearest Madam, open the door: admit me but for one moment to your presence.

But neither answer nor fluttering saluted my ear; and, the people being very quiet, I led on to the next apartment; and, the key being on the outside, I opened it, and looked all round it, and into the closet.

The man said he never saw so uncivil a gentleman in his life.

Hark thee, friend, said I; let me advise thee to be a little decent; or I shall teach thee a lesson thou never learnedst in all thy life.

Sir, said he, 'tis not like a gentleman, to affront a man in his own house.

Then prythee, man, replied I, don't crow upon thine own dunghil.

I stepped back to the locked door: My dear Miss Harlowe, I beg of you to open the door, or I'll break it open; —pushing hard against it, that it cracked again.

The man looked pale; and, trembling with his fright, made a plaguy long face; and called to one of his bodice-makers above, *Joseph, come down quickly.*

Joseph came down: a lion's-face grinning fellow;

thick, and short, and bushy-headed, like an old oak-pollard. Then did master John put on a sturdier look. But I only hummed a tune, traversed all the other apartments, sounded the passages with my knuckles, to find whether there were private doors, and walked up the next pair of stairs, singing all the way; John and Joseph, and Mrs. Smith, following me, trembling.

I looked round me there, and went into two open-door bed-chambers; searched the closets, the passages, and peeped through the key-hole of another: no Miss Harlowe, by Jupiter! What shall I do!—what shall I do! as the girls say.—Now will she be grieved that she is out of the way.

I said this on purpose to find out whether these people knew the lady's story; and had the answer I expected from Mrs. Smith—I believe not, Sir.

Why so, Mrs. Smith? Do you know who I am?

I can guess, Sir.

Whom do you guess me to be?

Your name is Mr. Lovelace, Sir, I make no doubt.

The very same. But how came you to guess so well, dame Smith! You never saw me before, did you?

Here, Jack, I laid out for a compliment, and missed it.

'Tis easy to guess, Sir; for there cannot be two such gentlemen as you.

Well said, dame Smith—but mean you *good* or *bad*? —*Handsome* was the least I thought she would have said.

I leave you to guess, Sir.

Condemned, thought I, by myself, on this appeal.

Why, father Smith, thy wife is a wit, man!—Didst thou ever find that out before?—But where is widow Lovick, dame Smith? My cousin John Belford says she

is a very good woman. Is she within? or is she gone with Miss Harlowe too?

She will be within by-and-by, Sir. She is not with the lady.

Well, but my good dear Mrs. Smith, where is the lady gone? and when will she return?

I can't tell, Sir.

Don't tell fibs, dame Smith; don't tell fibs, chucking her under the chin: which made John's upper-lip, with chin shortened, rise to his nose.—I am sure you know!—But here's another pair of stairs: let us see: Who lives up there?—but hold, here's another room locked up, tapping at the door—Who's at home? cried I.

That's Mrs. Lovick's apartment. She is gone out, and has the key with her.

Widow Lovick! rapping again, I believe you are at home: pray open the door.

John and Joseph muttered and whispered together.

No whispering, honest friends: 'tis not manners to whisper. Joseph, what said John to thee?

John! Sir, disdainfully repeated the good woman.

I beg pardon, Mrs. Smith: but you see the force of example. Had *you* showed your honest man more respect, *I* should. Let me give you a piece of advice—women who treat their husbands irreverently, teach strangers to use them with contempt. There, honest master John; why dost not pull off thy hat to me?—Oh! so thou wouldst, if thou hadst it on: but thou never wearest thy hat in thy wife's presence, I believe; dost thou?

None of your fleers and your jeers, Sir, cried John. I wish every married pair lived as happily as we do.

I wish so too, honest friend. But I'll be hanged if thou hast any children.

Why so, Sir?

Hast thou?—Answer me, man: Hast thou, or not?

Perhaps not, Sir. But what of that?

What of that?—Why I'll tell thee: The man who has no children by his wife must put up with plain John. Hadst thou a child or too, thou'dst be called Mr. Smith, with a courtesy, or a smile at least, at every word.

You are very pleasant, Sir, replied my dame. I fancy, if either my husband or I had as much to answer for as I know whom, we should not be so merry.

Why then, dame Smith, so much the worse for those who were obliged to keep you company. But I am not merry—I am sad!—Hey-ho!—Where shall I find my dear Miss Harlowe?

My beloved Miss Harlowe! [calling at the foot of the third pair of stairs,] if you are above, for Heaven's sake answer me. I am coming up.

Sir, said the good man, I wish you'd walk down. The servants' rooms, and the working-rooms, are up those stairs, and another pair; and nobody's there that you want.

Shall I go up, and see if Miss Harlowe be there, Mrs. Smith?

You may, Sir, if you please.

Then I won't; for, if she was, you would not be so obliging.

I am ashamed to give you all this attendance: you are the politest traders I ever knew. Honest Joseph, slapping him upon the shoulders on a sudden, which made him jump, didst ever grin for a wager, man?—for the rascal seemed not displeased with me; and, cracking his flat face from ear to ear, with a distended mouth, showed his teeth, as

broad and as black as his thumb-nails.—But don't I hinder thee? What canst earn a-day, man?

Half-a-crown I can earn a-day; with an air of pride and petulance, at being startled.

There then is a day's wages for thee. But thou needest not attend me farther.

Come, Mrs. Smith, come John, (Master Smith I should say,) let's walk down, and give me an account where the lady is gone, and when she will return.

So down stairs led I. John and Joseph (though I had discharged the latter,) and my dame, following me, to show their complaisance to a stranger.

I re-entered one of the first-floor rooms. I have a great mind to be your lodger: for I never saw such obliging folks in my life. What rooms have you to let?

None at all, Sir.

I am sorry for that. But whose is this?

Mine, Sir, chuffily said John.

Thine, man! why then I will take it of thee. This, and a bed-chamber, and a garret for one servant, will content me. I will give thee thine own price, and half a guinea a day over, for those conveniencies.

For ten guineas a day, Sir—

Hold, John! (Master Smith I should say)—Before thou speakest, consider—I won't be affronted, man.

Sir, I wish you'd walk down, said the good woman. Really, Sir, you take—

Great liberties I hope you would not say, Mrs. Smith?

Indeed, Sir, I was going to say something like it.

Well, then, I am glad I prevented you; for such words better become my mouth than your's. But I must lodge with you till the lady returns. I *believe* I must. How-

ever, you may be wanted in the shop; so we'll talk that over there.

Down I went, they paying diligent attendance on my steps.

When I came into the shop, seeing no chair or stool, I went behind the compter, and sat down under an arched kind of canopy of carved work, which these proud traders, emulating the *royal niche-fillers*, often give themselves, while a joint-stool, perhaps, serves those by whom they get their bread: such is the dignity of trade in this mercantile nation!

I looked about me, and above me; and told them I was very proud of my seat; asking, if John were ever permitted to fill this superb niche?

Perhaps he was, he said, very surlily.

That is it that makes thee look so like a statue, man.

John looked plaguy glum upon me. But his man Joseph and my man Will. turned round with their backs to us, to hide their grinning, with each his fist in his mouth.

I asked, what it was they sold?

Powder, and wash-balls, and snuff, they said; and gloves and stockings.

O come, I'll be your customer. Will. do I want wash-balls?

Yes, and please your Honour, you can dispense with one or two.

Give him half a dozen, dame Smith.

She told me she must come where I was, to serve them. Pray, Sir, walk from behind the compter.

Indeed but I won't. The shop shall be mine. Where are they, if a customer should come in?

She pointed over my head, with a purse mouth, as if she would not have simpered, could she have helped it. I

reached down the glass, and gave Will. six. There—put 'em up, Sirrah.

He did, grinning with his teeth out before; which touching my conscience, as the loss of them was owing to me, Joseph, said I, come hither. Come hither, man, when I bid thee.

He stalked towards me, his hands behind him, half willing, and half unwilling.

I suddenly wrapt my arm round his neck. Will. thy penknife, this moment. D——n the fellow, where's thy penknife?

O Lord! said the pollard-headed dog, struggling to get his head loose from under my arm, while my other hand was muzzling about his cursed chaps, as if I would take his teeth out.

I will pay thee a good price, man: don't struggle thus? The penknife, Will.!

O Lord, cried Joseph, struggling still more and more: and out comes Will's pruning-knife; for the rascal is a gardener in the country. I have only this, Sir.

The best in the world to launch a gum. D——n the fellow, why dost struggle thus?

Master and Mistress Smith being afraid, I suppose, that I had a design upon Joseph's throat, because he was their champion, (and this, indeed, made me take the more notice of him,) coming towards me with countenances tragi-comical, I let him go.

I only wanted, said I, to take out two or three of this rascal's broad teeth, to put them into my servant's jaws—and I would have paid him his price for them.—I would by my soul, Joseph.

Joseph shook his ears; and with both hands stroked down, smooth as it would lie, his bushy hair; and looked

at me as if he knew not whether he should laugh or be angry: but, after a stupid stare or two, stalked off to the other end of the shop, nodding his head at me as he went, still stroking down his hair; and took his stand by his master, facing about and muttering, that I was plaguy strong in the arms, and he thought would have throttled him. Then folding his arms, and shaking his bristled head, added, 'twas well I was a gentleman, or he would not have taken such an affront.

I demanded where their rappee was? the good woman pointed to the place; and I took up a scollop-shell of it, refusing to let her weigh it, and filled my box. And now, Mrs. Smith, said I, where are your gloves?

She showed me; and I chose four pair of them, and set Joseph, who looked as if he wanted to be taken notice of again, to open the fingers.

A female customer, who had been gaping at the door, came in for some Scots snuff; and I would serve her. The wench was plaguy homely; and I told her so; or else, I said, I would have treated her. She, in anger, [no woman is homely in her own opinion,] threw down her penny; and I put it in my pocket.

Just then, turning my eye to the door, I saw a pretty, genteel lady, with a footman after her, peeping in with a What's the matter, good folks? to the starers; and I ran to her from behind the compter, and, as she was making off, took her hand, and drew her into the shop; begging that she would be my customer; for that I had but just begun trade.

What do you sell, Sir? said she, smiling; but a little surprised.

Tapes, ribbands, silk laces, pins, and needles; for I

am a pedlar: powder, patches, wash-balls, stockings, garters, snuffs, and pin-cushions—Don't we, goody Smith?

So in I gently drew her to the compter, running behind it myself, with an air of great diligence and obligingness. I have excellent gloves and wash-balls, Madam; rappee, Scots, Portugal, and all sorts of snuff.

Well, said she, in a very good humour, I'll encourage a young beginner for once. Here, Andrew, [to her footman,] you want a pair of gloves, don't you?

I took down a parcel of gloves, which Mrs. Smith pointed to, and came round to the fellow to fit them on myself.

No matter for opening them, said I: thy fingers, friend, are as stiff as drum-sticks. Push!—Thou'rt an awkward dog! I wonder such a pretty lady will be followed by such a clumsy varlet.

The fellow had no strength for laughing: and Joseph was mightily pleased, in hopes, I suppose, I would borrow a few of Andrew's teeth, to keep him in countenance: and, father and mother Smith, like all the world, as the jest was turned from themselves, seemed diverted with the humour.

The fellow said the gloves were too little.

Thrust, and be d——d to thee, said I: why, fellow, thou hast not the strength of a cat.

Sir, Sir, said he, laughing, I shall hurt your Honour's side.

D——n thee, thrust I say.

He did; and burst out the sides of the glove.

Will. said I, where's thy pruning-knife? By my soul, friend, I had a good mind to pare thy cursed paws. But come, here's a larger pair: try them, when thou gettest home; and let thy sweetheart, if thou hast one, mend the other, so take both.

The lady laughed at the humour; as did my fellow, and Mrs. Smith, and Joseph: even John laughed, though he seemed by the force put upon his countenance to be but half pleased with me neither.

Madam, said I, and stepped behind the compter, bowing over it, now I hope you will buy something for yourself. Nobody shall use you better, nor sell you cheaper.

Come, said she, give me six-penny worth of Portugal snuff.

They showed me where it was, and I served her; and said, when she would have paid me, I took nothing at my opening.

If I treated her footman, she told me, I should not treat her.

Well, with all my heart, said I: 'tis not for us tradesmen to be saucy—Is it, Mrs. Smith?

I put her sixpence in my pocket; and, seizing her hand, took notice to her of the crowd that had gathered about the door, and besought her to walk into the back-shop with me.

She struggled her hand out of mine, and would stay no longer.

So I bowed, and bid her kindly welcome, and thanked her, and hoped I should have her custom another time.

She went away smiling; and Andrew after her; who made me a fine bow.

I began to be out of countenance at the crowd, which thickened apace; and bid Will. order the chair to the door.

Well Mrs. Smith, with a grave air, I am heartily sorry Miss Harlowe is abroad. You don't tell me where she is?

Indeed, Sir, I cannot.

You *will* not, you mean.—She could have no notion of my coming. I came to town but last night. I have been

very ill. She has almost broken my heart by her cruelty. You know my story, I doubt not. Tell her, I must go out of town to-morrow morning. But I will send my servant, to know if she will favour me with one half hour's conversation; for, as soon as I get down, I shall set out for Dover, in my way to France, if I have not a countermand from *her*, who has the sole disposal of my fate.

And so flinging down a Portugal six-and-thirty, I took Mr. Smith by the hand, telling him, I was sorry we had not more time to be better acquainted; and bidding farewell to honest Joseph, (who pursed up his mouth as I passed by him, as if he thought his teeth still in jeopardy,) and Mrs. Smith adieu, and to recommend me to her fair lodger, hummed an air, and, the chair being come, whipt into it; the people about the door seeming to be in good humour with me; one crying, a pleasant gentleman, I warrant him! and away I was carried to White's, according to direction.

As soon as I came thither, I ordered Will. to go and change his clothes, and to disguise himself by putting on his black wig, and keeping his mouth shut; and then to dodge about Smith's, to inform himself of the lady's motions.

I GIVE thee this impudent account of myself, that thou mayst rave at me, and call me hardened, and what thou wilt. For, in the first place, I, who had been so lately ill, was glad I was alive; and then I was so balked by my charmer's unexpected absence, and so ruffled by that, and by the bluff treatment of father John, that I had no other way to avoid being out of humour with all I met with. Moreover I was rejoiced to find, by the lady's absence, and by her going out at six in the morning, that it was im-

possible she should be so ill as thou representest her to be; and this gave me still higher spirits. Then I know the sex always love cheerful and humourous fellows. The dear creature herself used to be pleased with my gay temper and lively manner; and had she been told that I was blubbering for her in the back-shop, she would have despised me still more than she does.

Furthermore, I was sensible that the people of the house must needs have a terrible notion of me, as a savage, bloody-minded, obdurate fellow; a perfect woman-eater; and, no doubt, expected to see me with the claws of a lion, and the fangs of a tiger; and it was but policy to show them what a harmless pleasant fellow I am, in order to familiarize the Johns and the Josephs to me. For it was evident to me, by the good woman's calling them down, that she thought me a dangerous man. Whereas now, John and I have shaken hands together, and dame Smith having seen that I have the face, and hands, and looks of a man, and walk upright, and prate, and laugh, and joke, like other people; and Joseph, that I can talk of taking his teeth out of his head, without doing him the least hurt; they will all, at my next visit, be much more easy and pleasant to me than Andrew's gloves were to him; and we shall be as thoroughly acquainted, as if we had known one another a twelvemonth.

When I returned to our mother's, I again cursed her and all her nymphs together; and still refused to see either Sally or Polly! I raved at the horrid arrest; and told the old dragon that it was owing to her and her's that the fairest virtue in the world was ruined; my reputation for ever blasted; and that I was not married and happy in the love of the most excellent of her sex.

She, to pacify me, said she would show me a new face

that would please me; since I would not see my Sally, who was dying for grief.

Where is this new face? cried I: let me see her, though I shall never see any face with pleasure but Miss Harlowe's.

She won't come down, replied she. She will not be at the word of command yet. She is but just in the trammels; and must be waited upon, I'll assure you; and courted much besides.

Ay! said I, that looks well. Lead me to her this instant.

I followed her up: and who should she be, but that little toad Sally!

O curse you, said I, for a devil! Is it you? is your's the new face?

O my dear, dear Mr. Lovelace! cried she, I am glad any thing will bring you to me!—and so the little beast threw herself about my neck, and there clung like a cat. Come, said she, what will you give me, and I'll be virtuous for a quarter of an hour, and mimic your Clarissa to the life?

I was *Belforded* all over. I could not bear such an insult upon the dear creature, (for I have a soft and generous nature in the main, whatever thou thinkest;) and cursed her most devoutly, for taking my beloved's name in her mouth in such a way. But the little devil was not to be balked; but fell a crying, sobbing, praying, begging, exclaiming, fainting, that I never saw my lovely girl so well aped. Indeed I was almost taken in; for I could have fancied I had her before me once more.

O this sex! this artful sex! there's no minding them. At first, indeed, their grief and their concern may be real: but, give way to the hurricane, and it will soon die away

in soft murmurs, thrilling upon your ears like the notes of a well-tuned viol. And, by Sally, one sees that art will generally so well supply the place of nature, that you shall not easily know the difference. Miss Clarissa Harlowe, indeed, is the only woman in the world I believe that can say, in the words of her favourite Job, (for I can quote a text as well as she,) *But it is not so with me.*

They were very inquisitive about my fair-one. They told me that you seldom came near them; that, when you did, you put on plaguy grave airs; would hardly stay five minutes; and did nothing but praise Miss Harlowe, and lament her hard fate. In short, that you despised them; was full of sentences; and they doubted not, in a little while, would be a lost man, and marry.

A pretty character for thee, is it not? thou art in a blessed way; yet hast nothing to do but to *go on in it;* and then what a work hast thou to go through! If thou turnest back, these sorceresses will be like the czar's cossacks, [at Pultowa, I think it was,] who were planted with ready primed and cocked pieces behind the regulars, in order to shoot them dead, if they did not push on and conquer; and then wilt thou be most lamentably despised by every harlot thou hast made—and, O Jack, how formidable, in that case, will be the number of thy enemies!

I intend to regulate my motions by Will.'s intelligence; for see this dear creature I must and will. Yet I have promised Lord M. to be down in two or three days at farthest; for he is grown plaguy fond of me since I was ill.

I am in hopes that the word I left, that I am to go out of town to-morrow morning, will soon bring the lady back again.

Mean time, I thought I would write to divert thee, while thou art of such importance about the dying; and

as thy servant, it seems, comes backward and forward every day, perhaps I may send thee another letter to-morrow, with the particulars of the interview between the dear creature and me; after which my soul thirsteth.

LETTER LVI.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday, Aug. 22.

I MUST write on, to divert myself: for I can get no rest; no refreshing rest. I awaked just now in a cursed fright. How a man may be affected by dreams!

'Methought I had an interview with my beloved. I 'found her all goodness, condescension, and forgiveness. 'She suffered herself to be overcome in my favour by the 'joint intercessions of Lord M., Lady Sarah, Lady Betty, 'and my two cousins Montague, who waited upon her in 'deep mourning; the ladies in long trains sweeping after 'them; Lord M. in a long black mantle trailing after '*him*. They told her they came in these robes to express 'their sorrow for my sins against her, and to implore her 'to forgive me.

'I myself, I thought, was upon my knees, with a sword 'in my hand, offering either to put it up in the scabbard, 'or to thrust it into my heart, as she should command the 'one or the other.

'At that moment her cousin Morden, I thought, all of 'a sudden, flashed in through a window, with his drawn 'sword—Die, Lovelace! said he; this instant die, and

'be d——d, if in earnest thou repairest not by marriage 'my cousin's wrongs!

'I was rising to resent this insult, I thought, when 'Lord M. ran between us with his great black mantle, 'and threw it over my face: and instantly my charmer, 'with that sweet voice which has so often played upon my 'ravished ears, wrapped her arms round me, muffled as I 'was in my Lord's mantle: O spare, spare my Lovelace! 'and spare, O Lovelace, my beloved cousin Morden! 'Let me not have my distresses augmented by the fall of 'either or both of those who are so dear to me!

'At this, charmed with her sweet mediation, I thought 'I would have clasped her in my arms: when immediately 'the most angelic form I had ever beheld, all clad in 'transparent white, descended in a cloud, which, opening, 'discovered a firmament above it, crowded with golden 'cherubs and glittering seraphs, all addressing her with 'Welcome, welcome, welcome! and, encircling my 'charmer, ascended with her to the region of seraphims; 'and instantly, the opened cloud closing, I lost sight of '*her*, and of the *bright form* together, and found wrapt 'in my arms her azure robe (all stuck thick with stars of 'embossed silver) which I had caught hold of in hopes of 'detaining her; but was all that was left me of my beloved 'Clarissa. And then, (horrid to relate!) the floor sinking 'under *me*, as the firmament had opened for *her*, I dropt 'into a hole more frightful than that of Elden; and, 'tumbling over and over down it, without view of a bot-'tom, I awaked in a panic; and was as effectually disor-'dered for half an hour, as if my dream had been a reality.'

Wilt thou forgive me troubling thee with such visionary stuff? Thou wilt see by it only that, sleeping or waking, my Clarissa is always present with me.

But here this moment is Will. come running hither to tell me that his lady actually returned to her lodgings last night between eleven and twelve; and is now there, though very ill.

I hasten to her. But, that I may not add to her indisposition, by any rough or boisterous behaviour, I will be as soft and gentle as the dove herself in my addresses to her.

> That I do love her, O all ye host of Heaven,
> Be witness.—That she is dear to me!
> Dearer than day, to one whom sight must leave;
> Dearer than life, to one who fears to die!

The chair is come. I fly to my beloved.

LETTER LVII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Curse upon my stars!—Disappointed again! It was about eight when I arrived at Smith's.—The woman was in the shop.

So, old acquaintance, how do you now? I know my love is above.—Let her be acquainted that I am here, waiting for admission to her presence, and can take no denial. Tell her, that I will approach her with the most respectful duty, and in whose company she pleases; and I will not touch the hem of her garment, without her leave.

Indeed, Sir, you are mistaken. The lady is not in this house, nor near it.

I'll see that.—Will.! beckoning him to me, and whispering, see if thou canst any way find out (without losing sight of the door, lest she should be below stairs) if she be in the neighbourhood, if not within.

Will. bowed, and went off. Up went I, without further ceremony; attended now only by the good woman.

I went into each apartment, except that which was locked before, and was now also locked: and I called to my Clarissa in the voice of love; but, by the still silence, was convinced she was not there. Yet, on the strength of my intelligence, I doubted not but she was in the house.

I then went up two pair of stairs, and looked round the first room: but no Miss Harlowe.

And who, pray, is in this room? stopping at the door of another.

A widow gentlewoman, Sir.—Mrs. Lovick.

O my dear Mrs. Lovick! said I.—I am intimately acquainted with Mrs. Lovick's character, from my cousin John Belford. I must see Mrs. Lovick by all means.—Good Mrs. Lovick, open the door.

She did.

Your servant, Madam. Be so good as to excuse me.—You have heard my story. You are an admirer of the most excellent woman in the world. Dear Mrs. Lovick, tell me what is become of her?

The poor lady, Sir, went out yesterday, on purpose to avoid you.

How so? she knew not that I would be here.

She was afraid you would come, when she heard you were recovered from your illness. Ah! Sir, what pity it is that so fine a gentleman should make such ill returns for God's goodness to him!

You are an excellent woman, Mrs. Lovick: I know that, by my cousin John Belford's account of you: and Miss Clarissa Harlowe is an angel.

Miss Harlowe is indeed an angel, replied she; and soon will be company for angels.

No jesting with such a woman as this, Jack.

Tell me of a truth, good Mrs. Lovick, where I may see this dear lady. Upon my soul, I will neither fright nor offend her. I will only beg of her to hear me speak for one half-quarter of an hour; and, if she will have it so, I will never trouble her more.

Sir, said the widow, it would be death for her to see you. She was at home last night; I'll tell you truth: but fitter to be in bed all day. She came home, she said, to die; and, if she could not avoid your visit, she was unable to fly from you; and believed she should die in your presence.

And yet go out again this morning early? How can that be, widow?

Why, Sir, she rested not two hours, for fear of you. Her fear gave her strength, which she'll suffer for, when that fear is over. And finding herself, the more she thought of your visit, the less able to stay to receive it, she took chair, and is gone nobody knows whither. But, I believe, she intended to be carried to the water-side, in order to take boat; for she cannot bear a coach. It extremely incommoded her yesterday.

But before we talk any further, said I, if she be gone abroad, you can have no objection to my looking into every apartment above and below; because I am told she is actually in the house.

Indeed, Sir, she is *not*. You may satisfy yourself, if you please: but Mrs. Smith and I waited on her to her

chair. We were forced to support her, she was so weak. She said, Whither *can* I go, Mrs. Lovick? whither *can* I go, Mrs. Smith?—Cruel, cruel man!—tell him I called him so, if he come again!—God give him that peace which he denies me!

Sweet creature! cried I; and looked down, and took out my handkerchief.

The widow wept. I wish, said she, I had never known so excellent a lady, and so great a sufferer! I love her as my own child!

Mrs. Smith wept.

I then gave over the hope of seeing her for this time. I was extremely chagrined at my disappointment, and at the account they gave of her ill health.

Would to Heaven, said I, she would put it in my power to repair her wrongs! I have been an ungrateful wretch to her. I need not tell you, Mrs. Lovick, how much I have injured her, nor how much she suffers by her relations' implacableness. 'Tis that, Mrs. Lovick, 'tis that implacableness, Mrs. Smith, that cuts her to the heart. Her family is the most implacable family on earth; and the dear creature, in refusing to see me, and to be reconciled to me, shows *her* relation to them a little too plainly.

O Sir, said the widow, not one syllable of what you say belongs to this lady. I never saw so sweet a creature! so edifying a piety! and one of so forgiving a temper! she is always accusing herself, and excusing her relations. And, as to you, Sir, she forgives you: she wishes you well; and happier than you will let her be. Why will you not, Sir, why will you not, let her die in peace? 'tis all she wishes for. You don't look like a hard-hearted gentleman!—How can you thus hunt and persecute a poor

lady, whom none of her relations will look upon? It makes my heart bleed for her.

And then she wept again. Mrs. Smith wept also. My seat grew uneasy to me. I shifted to another several times; and what Mrs. Lovick farther said, and showed me, made me still more uneasy.

Bad as the poor lady was last night, said she, she transcribed into her book a meditation on your persecuting her thus. I have a copy of it. If I thought it would have any effect, I would read it to you.

Let me read it myself, Mrs. Lovick.

She gave it to me. It has an Harlowe-spirited title: and, from a forgiving spirit, intolerable. I desired to take it with me. She consented, on condition that I showed it to 'Squire Belford. So here, Mr. 'Squire Belford, thou may'st read it, if thou wilt.

On being hunted after by the enemy of my soul.

Monday, Aug. 21.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man.

Preserve me from the violent man.

Who *imagines mischief in* his *heart.*

He *hath sharpened* his *tongue like a serpent. Adders poison is under* his *lips.*

Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked. Preserve me from the violent man, who hath *purposed to overthrow my goings.*

He hath *hid a snare for me.* He hath *spread a net by the way-side.* He hath *set gins for me in the way wherein I walked.*

Keep me from the snares which he hath *laid for me, and the gins of* this *worker of iniquity.*

The enemy hath persecuted my soul. He hath smitten my life down to the ground. He hath made me dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me. My heart within me is desolate.

Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble.

For my days are consumed like smoke: and my bones are burnt as the hearth.

My heart is smitten and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.

By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.

I am like a pelican of the wilderness. I am like an owl of the desart.

I watch; and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.

I have eaten ashes like bread; and mingled my drink with weeping:

Because of thine indignation, and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

My days are like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass.

Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked: further not his devices, lest he exalt himself.

Why now, Mrs. Lovick, said I, when I had read this meditation, as she called it, I think I am very severely treated by the lady, if she mean *me* in all this. For how is it that I am the *enemy of her soul*, when I love her both soul and body?

She says, that I am a *violent* man, and a *wicked* man. —That I have been so, I own: but I repent, and only

wish to have it in my power to repair the injuries I have done her.

The *gin*, the *snare*, the *net*, mean matrimony, I suppose—But is it a crime in me to wish to marry her? Would any other woman think it so? and choose to become a *pelican in the wilderness*, or a *lonely sparrow on the house-top*, rather than to have a mate that would chirp about her all day and all night?

She says, she has *eaten ashes like bread*—A sad mistake to be sure!—And *mingled her drink with weeping*—Sweet maudlin soul! should I say of any body confessing this, but Miss Harlowe.

She concludes with praying, that *the desires of the wicked* (meaning poor me, I doubt) *may not be granted;* that *my devices may not be furthered, lest I exalt myself.* I should undoubtedly exalt myself, and with reason, could I have the honour and the blessing of such a wife. And if my *desires* have so honourable an end, I know not why I should be called *wicked*, and why I should not be allowed to hope, that my honest *devices* may be *furthered*, that I MAY exalt myself.

But here, Mrs. Lovick, let me ask, as something is undoubtedly meant by the *lonely sparrow on the house-top*, is not the dear creature at this very instant (tell me truly) concealed in Mrs. Smith's cockloft?—What say you, Mrs. Lovick? What say you, Mrs. Smith, to this?

They assured me to the contrary; and that she was actually abroad, and they knew not where.

Thou seest, Jack, that I would fain have diverted the chagrin given me not only by the women's talk, but by this collection of Scripture-texts drawn up in array against me. Several *other* whimsical and light things I said [all I had for it!] with the same view. But the widow would

not let me come off so. She stuck to me; and gave me, as I told thee, a good deal of uneasiness, by her sensible and serious expostulations. Mrs. Smith put in now-and-then; and the two Jack-pudding fellows, John and Joseph, not being present, I had no provocation to turn the conversation into a farce; and, at last, they both joined warmly to endeavour to prevail upon me to give up all thoughts of seeing the lady. But I could not hear of that. On the contrary, I besought Mrs. Smith to let me have one of her rooms but till I could see her; and were it but for one, two, or three days, I would pay a year's rent for it; and quit it the moment the interview was over. But they desired to be excused; and were sure the lady would not come to the house till I was gone, were it for a *month*.

This pleased me; for I found they did not think her so very ill as they would have me believe her to be; but I took no notice of the slip, because I would not guard them against more of the like.

In short, I told them, I *must* and *would* see her: but that it should be with all the respect and veneration that heart could pay to excellence like her's: and that I would go round to all the churches in London and Westminster, where there were prayers or service, from sun-rise to sun-set, and haunt their house like a ghost, till I had the opportunity my soul panted after.

This I bid them tell her. And thus ended our serious conversation.

I took leave of them; and went down; and, stepping into my chair, caused myself to be carried to Lincoln's-Inn; and walked in the gardens till chapel was opened; and then I went in, and staid prayers, in hopes of seeing

the dear creature enter: but to no purpose; and yet I prayed most devoutly that she might be conducted thither, either by my good angel, or her own. And indeed I burn more than ever with impatience to be once more permitted to kneel at the feet of this adorable woman. And had I met her, or espied her in the chapel, it is my firm belief that I should not have been able (though it had been in the midst of the sacred office, and in the presence of thousands) to have forborne prostration to her, and even clamorous supplication for her *forgiveness:* a christian act; the exercise of it therefore worthy of the place.

After service was over, I stept into my chair again, and once more was carried to Smith's, in hopes I might have surprised her there: but no such happiness for thy friend. I staid in the back-shop an hour and an half, by my watch; and again underwent a good deal of preachment from the women. John was mainly civil to me now; won over a little by my serious talk, and the honour I professed for the lady. They all three wished matters could be made up between us: but still insisted that she could never get over her illness; and that her heart was broken. A cue, I suppose, they had from you.

While I was there a letter was brought by a particular hand. They seemed very solicitous to hide it from me; which made me suspect it was for her. I desired to be suffered to cast an eye upon the seal, and the superscription; promising to give it back to them unopened.

Looking upon it, I told them I knew the hand and seal. It was from her sister*. And I hoped it would bring her news that she would be pleased with.

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* See Letter LXVIII. of this volume.

They joined most heartily in the same hope: and, giving the letter to them again, I civilly took leave, and went away.

But I will be there again presently; for I fancy my courteous behaviour to these women will, on their report of it, procure me the favour I so earnestly covet. And so I will leave my letter unsealed, to tell thee the event of my next visit at Smith's.

Thy servant just calling, I sent thee this: and will soon follow it by another. Mean time, I long to hear how poor Belton is: to whom my best wishers.

LETTER LVIII.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Tuesday, Aug. 22.

I have been under such concern for the poor man, whose exit I almost hourly expect, and at the shocking scenes his illness and his agonies exhibit, that I have been only able to make memoranda of the melancholy passages, from which to draw up a more perfect account, for the instruction of us all, when the writing appetite shall return.

It is returned! Indignation has revived it, on receipt of thy letters of Sunday and yesterday; by which I have reason to reproach thee in very serious terms, that thou hast not kept thy honour with me: and if thy breach of it be attended with such effects as I fear it will be, I shall let thee know more of my mind on this head.

If thou wouldst be thought in earnest in thy wishes to move the poor lady in thy favour, thy ludicrous behaviour at Smith's, when it comes to be represented to her, will have a very *consistent* appearance; will it not?—I will, indeed, confirm her in her opinion, that the *grave* is more to be wished-for, by one of her serious and pious turn, than a *husband* incapable either of reflection or remorse; just recovered, as thou art, from a dangerous, at least a sharp illness.

I am extremely concerned for the poor unprotected lady. She was so excessively low and weak on Saturday, that I could not be admitted to her speech: and to be driven out of her lodgings, when it was fitter for her to be in bed, is such a piece of cruelty, as he only could be guilty of who could act as thou hast done by such an angel.

Canst thou thyself say, on reflection, that it has not the look of a wicked and hardened sportiveness, in thee, for the sake of a wanton humour only, (since it can answer no end that thou proposest to thyself, but the direct contrary,) to hunt from place to place a poor lady, who, like a harmless deer, that has already a barbed shaft in her breast, seeks only a refuge from thee in the shades of death.

But I will leave this matter upon thy own conscience, to paint thee such a scene from my memoranda, as thou perhaps wilt be moved by more effectually than by any other: because it is such a one as thou thyself must one day be a principal actor in, and, as I thought, hadst very lately in apprehension: and is the last scene of one of thy most intimate friends, who has been for the four past days labouring in the agonies of death. For, Lovelace, let this truth, this undoubted truth, be engraved on thy memory,

in all thy gaieties, That the life we are so fond of is hardly life; a mere breathing space only; and that, at the end of its longest date,

Thou must die, as well as Belton.

Thou knowest, by Tourville, what we had done as to the poor man's worldly affairs; and that we had got his unhappy sister to come and live with him (little did we think him so very near his end): and so I will proceed to tell thee, that when I arrived at his house on Saturday night, I found him excessively ill: but just raised, and in his elbow-chair, held up by his nurse and Mowbray (the roughest and most untouched creature that ever entered a sick man's chamber); while the maid-servants were trying to make that bed easier for him which he was to return to; his mind ten times uneasier than that could be, and the true cause that the down was no softer to him.

He had so much longed to see me, as I was told by his sister, (whom I sent for down to inquire how he was,) that they all rejoiced when I entered: Here, said Mowbray, here, Tommy, is honest Jack Belford!

Where, where? said the poor man.

I hear his voice, cried Mowbray: he is coming up stairs.

In a transport of joy, he would have raised himself at my entrance, but had like to have pitched out of the chair: and when recovered, called me his best friend! his *kindest* friend! but burst out into a flood of tears: O Jack! O Belford! said he, see the way I am in! See how weak! So *much*, and so *soon* reduced! Do you know me? Do you know your poor friend Belton?

You are not so much altered, my dear Belton, as you

think you are. But I see you are weak; very weak—and I am sorry for it.

Weak, weak, indeed, my dearest Belford, said he, and weaker in mind, if possible, than in body; and wept bitterly—or I should not thus unman myself. I, who never feared *any thing*, to be forced to show myself such a *nursling!*—I am quite ashamed of myself!—But don't despise me; dear Belford, don't despise me, I beseech thee.

I ever honoured a man that could weep for the distresses of *others;* and ever shall, said I; and such a one cannot be insensible of *his own.*

However, I could not help being *visibly* moved at the poor fellow's emotion.

Now, said the brutal Mowbray, do I think thee insufferable, Jack. Our poor friend is already a peg too low; and here thou art letting him down lower and lower still. This soothing of him in his dejected moments, and joining thy womanish tears with his, is not the way; I am sure it is not. If our Lovelace were here, he'd tell thee so.

Thou art an impenetrable creature, replied I; unfit to be present at a scene, the terrors of which thou wilt not be able to feel till thou feelest them in thyself; and then, if thou hadst *time for feeling*, my life for thine, thou behavest as pitifully as those thou thinkest *most* pitiful.

Then turning to the poor sick man, Tears, my dear Belton, are no signs of an *unmanly*, but, contrarily of a humane nature; they ease the over-charged heart, which would burst but for that kindly and natural relief.

> Give sorrow *words* (says *Shakspeare*)
> —The grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break.

I know, my dear Belton, thou usedst to take pleasure in repetitions from the poets; but thou must be tasteless of their beauties now: yet be not discountenanced by this uncouth and unreflecting Mowbray, for, as Juvenal says, *Tears are the prerogative of manhood.*

'Tis at least seasonably said, my dear Belford. It is kind to keep me in countenance for this *womanish weakness*, as Mowbray has been upbraidingly calling it, ever since he has been with me: and in so doing, (whatever I might have thought in such high health as he enjoys, has convinced me, that bottle-friends feel nothing but what moves in that little circle.

Well, well, proceed in your own way, Jack. I love my friend Belton as well as you can do; yet for the blood of me, I cannot but think, that soothing a man's weakness is increasing it.

If it be a weakness, to be touched at great and concerning events, in which our humanity is concerned, said I, thou mayest be right.

I have seen many a man, said the rough creature, going up Holborn-hill, that has behaved more like a man than either of you.

Ay, but, Mowbray, replied the poor man, those wretches have not had their minds enervated by such infirmities of body as I have long laboured under. Thou art a shocking fellow, and ever wert.—But to be able to remember nothing in these moments but what reproaches me, and to know that I cannot hold it long, and what may *then* be my lot, if—but interrupting himself, and turning to me, Give me thy pity, Jack; 'tis balm to my wounded soul; and let Mowbray sit indifferent enough to the pangs of a dying friend, to laugh at us both.

The hardened fellow then retired, with the air of a

Lovelace; only more stupid; yawning and stretching, instead of humming a tune as thou didst at Smith's.

I assisted to get the poor man into bed. He was so weak and low, that he could not bear the fatigue, and fainted away; and I verily thought was quite gone. But recovering, and his doctor coming, and advising to keep him quiet, I retired, and joined Mowbray in the garden; who took more delight to talk of the living Lovelace and levities, than of the dying Belton and his repentance.

I just saw him again on Saturday night before I went to bed; which I did early; for I was surfeited with Mowbray's frothy insensibility, and could not bear him.

It is such a horrid thing to think of, that a man who had lived in such strict terms of—what shall I call it? with another; the proof does not come out so, as to say, *friendship;* who had pretended so much love for him; could not bear to be out of his company; would ride an hundred miles an end to enjoy it; and would fight for him, be the cause right or wrong: yet now, could be so little moved to see him in such misery of body and mind, as to be able to rebuke him, and rather ridicule than pity him, because he was more affected by what he felt, than he had seen a malefactor, (hardened perhaps by liquor, and not softened by previous sickness,) on his going to execution.

This put me strongly in mind of what the divine Miss Harlowe once said to me, talking of friendship, and what my friendship to *you* required of me: 'Depend upon it, 'Mr. Belford,' said she, 'that one day you will be con-'vinced, that what *you* call friendship, is chaff and 'stubble; and that nothing is worthy of that sacred name,

'*That has not virtue for its base.*'

Sunday morning, I was called up at six o'clock, at the poor man's earnest request, and found him in a terrible agony. O Jack! Jack! said he, looking wildly, as if he had seen a spectre—Come nearer me! reaching out both arms—Come nearer me!—Dear, dear Belford, save me! Then clasping my arm with both his hands, and rearing up his head towards me, his eyes strangely rolling, Save me! dear Belford, save me! repeated he.

I put my other arm about him—Save you from what, my dear Belton! said I; save you from what? Nothing shall hurt you. What must I save you from?

Recovering from his terror, he sunk down again, O save me from myself! said he; save me from my own reflections. O dear Jack! what a thing it is to die; and not to have one comfortable reflection to revolve! What would I give for one year of my passed life?—only *one* year—and to have the same sense of things that I now have?

I tried to comfort him as well as I could: but free-livers to free-livers are sorry death-bed conforters. And he broke in upon me: O my dear Belford, said he, I am told, (and I have heard you ridiculed for it,) that the excellent Miss Harlowe has wrought a conversion in you. May it be so! You are a man of sense: O may it be so! Now is your time! Now, that you are in full vigour of mind and body!—But your poor Belton, alas! your poor Belton kept his vices, till they left him—and see the miserable effects in debility of mind and despondency! Were Mowbray here, and were he to *laugh* at me, I would own that this is the cause of my despair—that God's *justice* cannot let his *mercy* operate for my comfort: for, Oh! I have been very, *very* wicked; and have despised

the offers of his grace, till he has withdrawn it from me for ever,

I used all the arguments I could think of to give him consolation: and what I said had such an effect upon him, as to quiet his mind for the greatest part of the day; and in a lucid hour his memory served him to repeat these lines of Dryden, grasping my hand, and looking wistfully upon me:

> O that I less could fear to lose this being,
> Which, like a snow-ball, in my coward hand,
> The more 'tis grasp'd, the faster melts away!

In the afternoon of Sunday, he was inquisitive after you, and your present behaviour to Miss Harlowe. I told him how you had been, and how light you made of it. Mowbray was pleased with your impenetrable hardness of heart, and said, Bob. Lovelace was a good edge-tool, and steel to the back: and such coarse but hearty praises he gave you, as an abandoned man might *give*, and only an abandoned man could wish to *deserve*.

But hadst thou heard what the poor dying Belton said on this occasion, perhaps it would have made thee serious an *hour or two*, at least.

'When poor Lovelace is brought,' said he, 'to a sick-'bed, as I am now, and his mind forebodes that it is im-'possible he should recover, (which *his* could not do 'in his late illness: if it had, he could not have behaved 'so lightly in it;) when he revolves his past mis-spent 'life; his actions of offence to helpless innocents; in 'Miss Harlowe's case particularly; what then will he 'think of himself, or of his past actions? his mind de-'bilitated; his strength turned into weakness; unable

'to stir or to move without help; not one ray of hope 'darting in upon his benighted soul; his conscience 'standing in the place of a thousand witnesses; his pains 'excruciating; weary of the poor remnant of life he drags, 'yet dreading, that, in a few short hours, his bad will be 'changed to worse, nay, to worst of all; and that worst 'of all, to last beyond time and to all eternity; O Jack! 'what will he then think of the poor transitory gratifi-'cations of sense, which now engage all his attention? 'Tell him, dear Belford, tell him, how happy he is if he 'know his own happines; how happy, compared to his 'poor dying friend, that he has recovered from his illness, 'and has still an opportunity lent him, for which I would 'give a thousand worlds, had I them to give!'

I approved exceedingly of his reflections, as suited to his present circumstances; and inferred consolations to him from a mind so properly touched.

He proceeded in the like penitent strain. I have lived a very wicked life; so have we all. We have never made a conscience of doing whatever mischief either force or fraud enabled us to do. We have laid snares for the innocent heart; and have not scrupled by the too-ready sword to extend, as occasions offered, the wrongs we did to the persons whom we had before injured in their dearest relations. But yet, I flatter myself, sometimes, that I have less to answer for than either Lovelace or Mowbray; for I, by taking to myself that accursed deceiver from whom thou hast freed me, (and who, for years, unknown to me, was *retaliating upon my own head* some of the evils I had brought upon others,) and retiring, and living with her as a wife, was not party to half the mischiefs, that I doubt they, and Tourville, and even you, Belford, committed. As to the ungrateful Thomasine, I hope I

have met with my punishment in her. But notwithstanding this, dost thou not think, that *such* an action—and *such* an action—and *such* an action; [and then he recapitulated several enormities, in the perpetration of which (led on by false bravery, and the heat of youth and wine) we have all been concerned;] dost thou not think that these villanies, (let me call them *now* by their proper name,) joined to the wilful and gloried-in neglect of every duty that our better sense and education gave us to know were required of us as men and christians, are not enough to weigh down my soul into despondency?—Indeed, indeed, they are! and now to hope for *mercy;* and to depend upon the efficacy of that gracious attribute, when that no less shining one of *justice* forbids me to hope; how can I!—I, who have despised all warnings, and taken no advantage of the benefit I might have reaped from the lingering consumptive illness I have laboured under, but left all to the last stake; hoping for recovery against hope, and driving off repentance, till that grace is denied me; for, oh! my dear Belford! I can now neither repent, nor pray, as I ought; my heart is hardened, and I can do nothing but despair!—

More he would have said; but, overwhelmed with grief and infirmity, he bowed his head upon his pangful bosom, endeavouring to hide from the sight of the hardened Mowbray, who just then entered the room, those tears which he could not restrain.

Prefaced by a phlegmatic hem; sad, very sad, truly! cried Mowbray; who sat himself down on one side of the bed, as I sat on the other: his eyes half closed, and his lips pouting out to his turned-up nose, his chin curdled [to use one of thy descriptions]; leaving one at a loss to know whether stupid drowsiness or intense contemplation had got most hold of him.

An excellent, however uneasy lesson, Mowbray! said I.—By my faith it is! It may one day, who knows how soon? be our own case!

I thought of thy yawning-fit, as described in thy letter of Aug. 13. For up started Mowbray, writhing and shaking himself as in an ague-fit; his hands stretched over his head—with thy hoy! hoy! hoy! yawning. And then recovering himself, with another stretch and a shake, What's o'clock? cried he; pulling out his watch—and stalking by long tip-toe strides through the room, down stairs he went; and meeting the maid in the passage, I heard him say—Betty, bring me a bumper of claret; thy poor master, and this d——d Belford, are enough to throw a Hercules into the vapours.

Mowbray, after this, amusing himself in our friend's library, which is, as thou knowest, chiefly classical and dramatical, found out a passage in Lee's Oedipus, which he would needs have to be extremely apt; and in he came full fraught with the notion of the courage it would give the dying man, and read it to him. 'Tis poetical and pretty. This is it:

> When the *sun sets*, shadows that show'd at *noon*
> But small, appear most long and terrible:
> So when we think fate hovers o'er our heads,
> Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds:
> Owls, ravens, crickets, seem the watch of death;
> Nature's worst vermin scare her godlike sons:
> Echoes, the very leavings of a voice,
> Grow babbling ghosts, and call us to our graves.
> Each mole-hill thought swells to a huge Olympus;
> While we, fantastic dreamers, heave and puff,
> And sweat with our imagination's weight.

He expected praises for finding this out. But Belton turning his head from him, Ah, Dick! (said he,) these are not the reflections of a dying man!—What thou wilt one day feel, if it be what I now feel, will convince thee that the evils *before* thee, and *with* thee, are more than the effects of imagination.

I was called twice on Sunday night to him; for the poor fellow, when his reflections on his past life annoy him most, is afraid of being left with the women; and his eyes, they tell me, hunt and roll about for me. Where's Mr. Belford?—But I shall tire him out, cries he—yet beg of him to step to me—yet don't—yet do; were once the doubting and changeful orders he gave: and they called me accordingly.

But, alas! What could Belford do for him? Belford, who had been but too often the companion of his guilty hours; who wants mercy as much as he does; and is unable to promise it to himself, though 'tis all he can bid his poor friend *rely* upon!

What miscreants are we! What figures shall we make in these terrible hours!

If Miss HARLOWE's glorious *example*, on one hand, and the terrors of this poor man's *last scene* on the other, affect me not, I must be abandoned to perdition; as I fear thou wilt be, if thou benefittest not thyself from both.

Among the consolatory things I urged, when I was called up the last time on Sunday night, I told him, that he must not absolutely give himself up to despair: that many of the apprehensions he was under, were such as the best men must have, on the dreadful uncertainty of what was to succeed to this life. 'Tis well observed,

said I, by a poetical divine, who was an excellent christian*, That

> Death could not a more sad retinue find,
> Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

About eight o'clock yesterday (Monday) morning, I found him a little calmer. He asked me who was the author of the two lines I had repeated to him; and made me speak them over again. A *sad retinue*, indeed! said the poor man. And then expressing his hopelessness of life, and his terrors at the thoughts of dying; and drawing from thence terrible conclusions with regard to his future state; There is, said I, such a *natural* aversion to death in human nature, that you are not to imagine, that you, my dear Belton, are singular in the fear of it, and in the apprehensions that fill the thoughtful mind upon its approach; but you ought, as much as possible, to separate those *natural* fears which all men must have on so solemn an occasion, from those *particular* ones which your justly-apprehended unfitness fills you with. Mr. Pomfret, in his *Prospect of Death*, which I dipped into last night from a collection in your closet, which I put into my pocket, says, [and I turned to the place]

> Merely to die, no man of reason fears;
> For certainly we must,
> As we are born, return to dust;
> 'Tis the last point of many ling'ring years:
> But whither then we go,
> Whither, we fain would know;
> But human understanding cannot show.
> This makes US tremble———

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* *The Rev. Mr.* Norris, *of* Bemerton.

Mr. Pomfret, therefore, proceeded I, had such apprehensions of this dark state as you have: and the excellent divine I hinted at last night, who had very little else but human frailties to reproach himself with, and whose miscellanies fell into my hands among my uncle's books in my attendance upon him in his last hours, says,

> It must be done, my soul: but 'tis a strange,
> A dismal, and mysterious change,
> When thou shalt leave this tenement of clay,
> And to an unknown—somewhere—wing away;
> When time shall be eternity, and thou
> Shalt be—thou know'st not what—and live—
> thou know'st not how!
> Amazing state! no wonder that we dread
> To think of death, or view the dead;
> Thou'rt all wrapt up in clouds, as if to thee
> Our very knowledge had antipathy.

Then follows, what I repeated,

> Death could not a more sad retinue find,
> Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

Alas! my dear Belford [inferred the unhappy deep-thinker] what poor creatures does this convince me we mortals are *at best!*—But what then must be the case of such a profligate as I, who by a past wicked life have added greater force to these natural terrors? If death be so repugnant a thing to human nature, that *good* men will be startled at it, what must it be to one who has lived a life of sense and appetite; nor ever reflected upon the end which I now am within view of?

What could I say to an inference so fairly drawn? Mercy, mercy, *unbounded* mercy, was still my plea, though his repeated opposition of *justice* to it, in a manner

silenced that plea: and what would I have given to have had rise to my mind, one good, one eminently good action to have remembered him of, in order to combat his fears with it?

I believe, Lovelace, I shall tire thee, and that more with the subject of my letter, than even with the length of it. But, really, I think thy spirits are so offensively up since thy recovery, that I ought, as the melancholy subjects offer, to endeavour to reduce thee to the standard of humanity, by expatiating upon them. And then thou canst not but be curious to know every thing that concerns the poor man, for whom thou hast always expressed a great regard. I will therefore proceed as I have begun. If thou likest not to read it now, lay it by, if thou wilt, till the like circumstances befall thee, till like reflections from those circumstances seize thee; and then take it up, and compare the two cases together.

At his earnest request, I sat up with him last night; and, poor man! it is impossible to tell thee, how easy and safe he thought himself in my company, for the first part of the night: *A drowning man will catch at a straw*, the proverb well says: and a straw was I, with respect to any real help I could give him. He often awaked in terrors; and once calling out for me, Dear Belford, said he, Where are you?—Oh! There you are!—Give me your friendly hand!—Then grasping it, and putting his clammy, half-cold lips to it—How kind! I fear every thing when you are absent. But the presence of a friend, a sympathising friend—Oh! how comfortable!

But, about four in the morning, he frighted me much: he waked with three terrible groans; and endeavoured to speak, but could not presently—and when he did,—Jack,

Jack, Jack, five or six times repeated he as quick as thought, now, now, now, save me, save me, save me—I am going—going indeed!

I threw my arms about him, and raised him upon his pillow, as he was sinking (as if to hide himself) in the bed-clothes—And staring wildly, Where am I? said he, a little recovering. Did you not see him? turning his head this way and that; horror in his countenance; Did you not see him?

See whom, see what, my dear Belton!

O lay me upon the bed again, cried he!—Let me not die upon the floor!—Lay me down gently; and stand by me!—Leave me not!—All, all will soon be over!

You are already, my dear Belton, upon the bed. You have not been upon the floor. This is a strong delirium; you are faint for want of refreshment [for he had refused several times to take any thing]: let me persuade you to take some of this cordial julap. I will leave you, if you will not oblige me.

He then readily took it; but said he could have sworn that Tom. Metcalfe had been in the room, and had drawn him out of bed by the throat, upbraiding him with the injuries he had first done his sister, and then him, in the duel to which he owed that fever which cost him his life.

Thou knowest the story, Lovelace, too well, to need my repeating it: but, mercy on us, if in these terrible moments all the evils we do rise to our frighted imaginations!—If so, what shocking scenes have I, but still what more shocking ones hast thou, to go through, if, as the noble poet says,

If any sense at that sad time remains!

The doctor ordered him an opiate this morning early, which operated so well, that he dosed and slept several hours more quietly than he had done for the two past days and nights, though he had sleeping-draughts given him before. But it is more and more evident every hour that nature is almost worn out in him.

Mowbray, quite tired with this house of mourning, intends to set out in the morning to find you. He was not a little rejoiced to hear you were in town; I believe to have a pretence to leave us.

He has just taken leave of his poor friend, intending to go away early: an everlasting leave, I may venture to say; for I think he will hardly live till to-morrow night.

I believe the poor man would not have been sorry had he left him when I arrived; for 'tis a shocking creature, and enjoys too strong health to know how to pity the sick. Then (to borrow an observation from thee) he has, by nature, strong bodily organs, which those of his soul are not likely to whet out; and he, as well as the wicked friend he is going to, may last a great while from the strength of their constitutions, though so greatly different in their talents, if neither the sword nor the halter interpose.

I must *repeat*, That I cannot but be very uneasy for the poor lady whom you so cruelly persecute; and that I do not think that you have kept your honour with me. I was apprehensive, indeed, that you would attempt to see her, as soon as you got well enough to come up; and I told her as much, making use of it as an argument to prepare her for your visit, and to induce her to stand it.

But she could not, it is plain, bear the shock of it: and indeed she told me that she would not see you, though but for one half-hour, for the world.

Could she have prevailed upon herself, I know that the sight of her would have been as affecting to you, as your visit could have been to her; when you had seen to what a lovely skeleton (for she is really lovely still, nor can she, with such a form and features, be otherwise) you have, in a few weeks, reduced one of the most charming women in the world; and that in the full bloom of her youth and beauty.

Mowbray undertakes to carry this, that he may be more welcome to you, he says. Were it to be sent unsealed, the characters we write in would be Hebrew to the dunce. I desire you to return it; and I'll give you a copy of it upon demand; for I intend to keep it by me, as a guard against the infection of your company, which might otherwise, perhaps, some time hence, be apt to weaken the impressions I always desire to have of the awful scene before me. God convert us both!

LETTER LIX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday Morn. 11 o'clock.

I BELIEVE no man has two such servants as I have. Because I treat them with kindness, and do not lord it over my inferiors, and d—n and curse them by looks and words like Mowbray; or beat their teeth out like Love-

lace; but cry, Pr'ythee, Harry, do this, and, Pr'ythee, Jonathan, do that; the fellows pursue their own devices, and regard nothing I say, but what falls in with these.

Here, this vile Harry, who might have brought your letter of yesterday in good time, came not in with it till past eleven at night (drunk, I suppose); and concluding that I was in bed, as he pretends (because he was told I sat up the preceding night) brought it not to me; and having overslept himself, just as I had sealed up my letter, in comes the villain with the forgotten one, shaking his ears, and looking as if he himself did not believe the excuses he was going to make. I questioned him about it, and heard his pitiful pleas; and though I never think it becomes a gentleman to treat people insolently who by their stations are humbled beneath his feet, yet could I not forbear to *Lovelace* and *Mowbray* him most cordially.

And this detaining Mowbray (who was ready to set out to you before) while I write a few lines upon it, the fierce fellow, who is impatient to exchange the company of a dying Belton for that of a too-lively Lovelace, affixed a *supplement* of curses upon the staring fellow, that was larger than my *book*—nor did I offer to take off the bear from such a mongrel, since, on this occasion, he deserved not of me the protection which every master owes to a good servant.

He has not done cursing him yet; for stalking about the court-yard with his boots on, (the poor fellow dressing his horse, and unable to get from him,) he is at him without mercy; and I will heighten his impatience, (since being just under the window where I am writing, he will not let me attend to my pen,) by telling you how he fills my ears as well as the fellow's, with his—Hay, Sir! And G—d d—n ye, Sir! And were ye my servant, ye dog

ye! And must I stay here till the mid-day sun scorches me to a parchment, for such a mangy dog's drunken neglect?—Ye lie, Sirrah!—Ye lie, I tell you—[I hear the fellow's voice in an humble excusatory tone, though not articulately] Ye lie, ye dog!—I'd a good mind to thrust my whip down your drunken throat: d—n me, if I would not flay the skin from the back of such a rascal, if thou wert mine, and have dog's-skin gloves made of it, for thy brother scoundrels to wear in remembrance of thy abuses of such a master.

The poor horse suffers for this, I doubt not; for, What now! and, Stand still, and be d—d to ye, cries the fellow, with a kick, I suppose, which he better deserves himself; for these varlets, where they can, are Mowbrays and Lovelaces to man or beast; and not daring to answer *him*, is flaying the poor *horse*.

I hear the fellow is just escaped, the horse, (better curried than ordinary, I suppose, in half the usual time,) by his clanking shoes, and Mowbray's silence, letting me know, that I may now write on: and so, I will tell thee that, in the first place, (little as I, as well as you, regard dreams,) I would have thee lay thine to heart; for I could give thee such an interpretation of it, as would shock thee, perhaps; and if thou askest me for it, I will.

Mowbray calls to me from the court-yard, that 'tis a cursed hot day, and he shall be fried by riding in the noon of it: and that poor Belton longs to see me. So I will only add my earnest desire, that you will give over all thoughts of seeing the lady, if, when this comes to your hand, you have not seen her: and, that it would be kind, if you'd come, and, for the last time you will ever see your poor friend, share my concern for him; and, in him, see what, in a little time, will be your fate and mine, and

that of Mowbray, Tourville, and the rest of us—For what are ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years, to look back to; in the longest of which periods forward we shall all perhaps be mingled with the dust from which we sprung?

LETTER LX.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wednesday Morn. Aug. 23.

All alive, dear Jack, and in ecstasy!—Likely to be once more a happy man! For I have received a letter from my beloved Miss Harlowe; in consequence, I suppose, of that which I mentioned in my last to be left for her from her sister. And I am setting out for Berks directly, to show the contents to my Lord M. and to receive the congratulations of all my kindred upon it.

I went, last night, as I intended, to Smith's: but the dear creature was not returned at near ten o'clock. And, lighting upon Tourville, I took him home with me, and made him sing me out of my megrims. I went to bed tolerably easy at two; had bright and pleasant dreams; (not such a frightful one as that I gave thee an account of;) and at eight this morning, as I was dressing, to be in readiness against the return of my fellow, whom I had sent to inquire after the lady, I had the following letter brought me by a chairman:

TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

SIR, Tuesday Night, 11 o'clock (Aug. 22.)

I HAVE good news to tell you. I am setting out with all diligence for my father's house, I am bid to hope that he will receive his poor penitent with a goodness peculiar to himself; for I am overjoyed with the assurance of a thorough reconciliation, through the interposition of a dear, blessed friend, whom I always loved and honoured. I am so taken up with my preparation for this joyful and long-wished-for journey, that I cannot spare one moment for any other business, having several matters of the last importance to settle first. So, pray, Sir, don't disturb or interrupt me—I beseech you don't. You may possibly in time see me at my father's; at least if it be not your own fault.

I will write a letter, which shall be sent you when I am got thither and received: till when, I am, &c.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

I dispatched instantly a letter to the dear creature, assuring her, with the most thankful joy, 'That I would 'directly set out for Berks, and wait the issue of the 'happy reconciliation, and the charming hopes she had 'filled me with. I poured out upon her a thousand 'blessings. I declared that it should be the study of my 'whole life to merit such transcendent goodness: and 'that there was nothing which her father or friends should 'require at my hands, that I would not for *her* sake 'comply with, in order to promote and complete so de-'sirable a reconciliation.'

I hurried it away without taking a copy of it; and I

have ordered the chariot-and-six to be got ready; and hey for M. Hall! Let me but know how Belton does. I hope a letter from thee is on the road. And if the poor fellow can spare thee, make haste, I command thee, to attend this truly divine lady. Thou mayest not else see her of months perhaps; at least, not while she is Miss Harlowe. And oblige me, if possible, with one letter before she sets out, confirming to me and accounting for this generous change.

But what accounting for it is necessary? The dear creature cannot receive consolation herself but she must communicate it to others. How noble! She would not see me in her adversity; but no sooner does the sun of prosperity begin to shine upon her than she forgives me.

I know to whose mediation all this is owing. It is to Colonel Morden's. She always, as she says, loved and honoured him! And he loved her above all his relations.

I shall now be convinced that there is something in dreams. The opening cloud is the reconciliation in view. The bright form, lifting up my charmer through it to a firmament stuck round with golden cherubims and seraphims, indicates the charming little boys and girls, that will be the fruits of this happy reconciliation. The welcomes, thrice repeated, are those of her family, now no more to be deemed implacable. Yet are they a family, too, that my soul cannot mingle with.

But then what is my tumbling over and over through the floor into a frightful hole, *descending* as she *ascends?* Ho! only this! it alludes to my disrelish to matrimony: Which is a bottomless pit, a gulph, and I know not what. And I suppose, had I not awoke in such a plaguy fright, I had been soused into some river at the bottom of the hole, and then been carried (mundified or purified from

my past iniquities,) by the same bright form (waiting for me upon the mossy banks,) to my beloved girl; and we should have gone on cherubiming of it and carolling to the end of the chapter.

But what are the black sweeping mantles and robes of Lord M. thrown over my face? And what are those of the ladies? O Jack! I have these too: They indicate nothing in the world but that my Lord will be so good as to die, and leave me all he has. So, rest to thy good natured soul, honest Lord M.

Lady Sarah Sadleir and Lady Betty Lawrance, will also die, and leave me swinging legacies.

Miss Charlotte and her sister—what will become of them?—Oh! they will be in mourning, of course, for their uncle and aunts—that's right!

As to Morden's flashing through the window, and crying, Die, Lovelace, and be d——d, if thou wilt not repair my cousin's wrongs! That is only, that he would have sent me a challenge, had I not been disposed to do the lady justice.

All I dislike is this part of the dream: for, even in a dream, I would not be thought to be threatened into any measure, though I liked it ever so well.

And so much for my prophetic dream.

Dear charming creature! What a meeting will there be between her and her father and mother and uncles! What transports, what pleasure, will this happy, long-wished-for reconciliation give her dutiful heart! And indeed now methinks I am glad she *is* so dutiful to them; for her duty to her parents is a conviction to me that she will be *as* dutiful to her husband: since duty upon principle is an uniform thing.

Why pr'ythee, now, Jack, I have not been so much

to blame as thou thinkest: for had it not been for me, who have led her into so much distress, she could neither have *received* nor *given* the joy that will now overwhelm them all. So here rises great and durable good out of temporary evil.

I knew they loved her (the pride and glory of their family,) too well to hold out long!

I wish I could have seen Arabella's letter. She has always been so much eclipsed by her sister, that I dare say she has signified this reconciliation to her with intermingled phlegm and wormwood; and her invitation most certainly runs all in the rock-water style.

I shall long to see the promised letter too when she is got to her father's, which I hope will give an account of the reception she will meet with.

There is a solemnity, however, I think, in the style of her letter, which pleases and affects me at the same time. But as it is evident she loves me still, and hopes soon to see me at her father's, she could not help being a little solemn, and half-ashamed, [dear blushing pretty rogue!] to own her love, after my usage of her.

And then her subscription: *Till when, I am*, CLARISSA HARLOWE: as much as to say, *after that*, I shall be, if not *your own fault*, CLARISSA LOVELACE!

O my best love! My ever-generous and adorable creature! How much does this thy forgiving goodness exalt us both!—Me, for the occasion given thee! Thee, for turning it so gloriously to thy advantage, and to the honour of both!

And if, my beloved creature, you will but connive at the imperfections of your adorer, and not play the *wife* upon me: if, while the charms of novelty have their force with me, I should happen to be drawn aside by the love

of intrigue, and of plots that my soul delights to form and pursue; and if thou wilt not be open-eyed to the follies of my youth, [a transitory state;] every excursion shall serve but the more to endear thee to me, till in time, and in a very little time too, I shall get above sense; and then, charmed by thy soul-attracting converse; and brought to despise my former courses; what I now, at distance, consider as a painful duty, will be my joyful choice, and all my delight will centre in thee!

Mowbray is just arrived with thy letters. I therefore close my agreeable subject, to attend to one which I doubt will be very shocking.

I have engaged the rough varlet to bear me company in the morning to Berks; where I shall file off the rust he has contracted in his attendance upon the poor fellow.

He tells me that, between the dying Belton and the preaching Belford, he shan't be his own man these three days: and says that thou addest to the unhappy fellow's weakness, instead of giving him courage to help him to bear his destiny.

I am sorry he takes the unavoidable lot so heavily. But he has been long ill; and sickness enervates the mind as well as the body; as he himself very significantly observed to thee.

LETTER LXI.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Wedn. Evening.

I HAVE been reading thy shocking letter—Poor Belton! what a multitude of lively hours have we passed together! He was a fearless, cheerful fellow: who'd have thought that all should end in such dejected whimpering and terror?

But why didst thou not comfort the poor man about the rencounter between him and that poltroon Metcalfe? He acted in that affair like a man of true honour, and as I should have acted in the same circumstances. Tell him I say so; and that what happened he could neither help nor foresee.

Some people are as sensible of a scratch from a pin's point, as others from a push of a sword: and who can say any thing for the sensibility of such fellows? Metcalfe would resent for his sister, when his sister resented not for herself. Had she demanded her brother's protection and resentment, that would have been *another man's matter*, to speak in Lord M.'s phrase: but she herself thought her brother a coxcomb to busy himself undesired in her affairs, and wished for nothing but to be provided for decently and privately in her lying-in; and was willing to take the chance of *Maintenon-ing* his conscience in her favour*, and get-

* Madam Maintenon was reported to have prevailed upon Lewis XIV. of France, in his old age, (sunk, as he was, by ill success in the field,) to marry her, by way of compounding with his conscience for the freedoms of his past life, to which she attributed his public losses.

ting him to marry when the little stranger came; for she knew what an easy, good-natured fellow he was. And indeed if she *had* prevailed upon him, it might have been happy for both; as then he would not have fallen in with his cursed Thomasine. But truly this officious brother of her's must interpose. This made a trifling affair important: And what was the issue? Metcalfe challenged; Belton met him; disarmed him; gave him his life: but the fellow, more sensible in his *skin* than in his *head*, having received a scratch, was frighted: it gave him first a puke, then a fever, and then he died, *that was all.* And how could Belton help that?—But sickness, a long tedious sickness, will make a bugbear of any thing to a languishing heart, I see that. And so far was Mowbray *à-propos* in the verses from *Nat. Lee*, which thou hast transcribed.

Merely to die, no man of reason fears, is a mistake, say thou, or say thy author, what ye will. And thy solemn parading about the natural repugnance between life and death, is a proof that it is.

Let me tell thee, Jack, that so much am I pleased with this world, in the main; though, in some points too, the world (to make a *person* of it,) has been a rascal to me; so delighted am I with the joys of youth; with my worldly prospects as to fortune; and now, newly, with the charming hopes given me by my dear, thrice dear, and for ever dear CLARISSA; that were I even sure that nothing bad would come hereafter, I should be very loth (very much *afraid*, if thou wilt have it so,) to lay down my life and them together; and yet, upon a call of honour, no man fears death less than myself.

But I have not either inclination or leisure to weigh thy *leaden* arguments, except in the *pig*, or, as thou wouldst say, in the *lump*.

If I return thy letters, let me have them again some time hence, that is to say, when I am married, or when poor Belton is half forgotten; or when *time* has enrolled the honest fellow among those whom we have *so long* lost, that we may remember them with more pleasure than pain; and then I may give them a serious perusal, and enter with thee as deeply as thou wilt into the subject.

When I am married, said I?—What a sound has that! I must wait with patience for a sight of this charming creature, till she is at her father's. And yet, as the but blossoming beauty, as thou tellest me, is reduced to a shadow, I should have been exceedingly delighted to see her now, and every day till the happy one; that I might have the pleasure of observing how sweetly, hour by hour, she will rise to her pristine glories, by means of that state of ease and contentment, which will take place of the stormy *past*, upon her reconciliation with her friends, and our happy nuptials.

LETTER LXII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Well, but now my heart is a little at ease, I will condescend to take brief notice of some other passages in thy letters.

I find I am to thank *thee*, that the dear creature has avoided my visit. Things are now in so good a train that I must forgive thee; else thou shouldst have heard more of this new instance of disloyalty to thy general.

Thou art continually giving thyself high praise, by way

of *opposition*, as I may say, to others; gently and artfully blaming thyself for qualities thou wouldst at the same time have to be thought, and which generally are thought, praise-worthy.

Thus, in the airs thou assumest about thy servants, thou wouldst pass for a mighty humane mortal; and that at the expense of Mowbray and me, whom thou representest as kings and emperors to our menials. Yet art thou always unhappy in thy attempts of this kind, and never canst make us, who know thee, believe that to be a virtue in thee, which is but the effect of constitutional phlegm and absurdity.

Knowest thou not, that some men have a native dignity in their manner, that makes them more regarded by a look, than either thou canst be in thy low style, or Mowbray in his high?

I am fit to be a prince, I can tell thee, for I reward well, and I punish seasonably and properly; and I am generally as well served as any man.

The art of governing these underbred varlets lies more in the dignity of looks than in words; and thou art a sorry fellow, to think humanity consists in acting by thy servants, as men must act who are not able to pay them their wages; or had made them masters of secrets, which, if divulged, would lay them at the mercy of such wretches.

Now to me, who never did any thing I was ashamed to own, and who have more ingenuousness than ever man had; who can call a villany by its right name, though practised by myself, and (by my own readiness to reproach myself) anticipate all reproach from others; who am not such a hypocrite, as to wish the world to think me other or better than I am—it is my part, to *look* a servant into his duty, if I can; nor will I keep one who knows not

how to take me by a nod, or a wink; and who, when I smile, shall not be all transport; when I frown, all terror. If, indeed, I am out of the way a little, I always take care to reward the varlets for patiently bearing my displeasure. But this I hardly ever am but when a fellow is egregiously stupid in any plain point of duty, or will be wiser than his master; and when he shall tell me, that he thought acting contrary to my orders was the way to serve me best.

One time or other I will enter the lists with thee upon thy conduct and mine to servants; and I will convince thee, that what thou wouldst have pass for humanity, if it be indiscriminately practised to all tempers, will perpetually subject thee to the evils thou complainest of; and *justly* too; and that *he* only is fit to be a master of servants, who can command their attention as much by a *nod*, as if he were to *pr'ythee* a fellow to do his duty, on one hand, or to talk of *flaying*, and *horse-whipping*, like Mowbray, on the other: for the servant who being *used* to *expect* thy creeping style, will always be master of his master, and he who deserves to be treated as the other, is not fit to be any man's servant; nor would I keep such a fellow to rub my horse's heels.

I shall be the readier to enter the lists with thee upon this argument, because I have presumption enough to think that we have not in any of our dramatic poets, that I can at present call to mind, one character of a servant of either sex, that is justly hit off. So absurdly wise *some*, and so sottishly foolish *others;* and *both* sometimes in the *same* person. *Foils* drawn from the lees or dregs of the people to set off the characters of their masters and mistresses; nay, sometimes, which is still more absurd, introduced with more wit than the poet has to bestow upon their prin-

cipals.—Mere *flints* and *steels* to strike fire with—or, to vary the metaphor, to serve for whetstones to wit, which, *otherwise*, could not be made apparent; or, for engines to be made use of like the *machinery* of the antient poets, (or the still *more* unnatural soliloquy,) to help on a sorry plot, or to bring about a necessary *eclaircissement*, to save the poet the trouble of thinking deeply for a better way to wind up his bottoms.

Of this I am persuaded, (whatever my *practice* be to my own servants,) that thou wilt be benefited by my *theory*, when we come to controvert the point. For then I shall convince thee, that the *dramatic* as well as *natural* characteristics of a good servant ought to be fidelity, common sense, cheerful obedience, and silent respect; that wit in his station, except to his companions, would be sauciness; that he should never presume to give his advice; that if he venture to expostulate upon any unreasonable command, or such a one as appeared to him to be so, he should do it with humility and respect, and take a proper season for it. But such lessons do most of the dramatic performances I have seen give, where servants are introduced as characters essential to the play, or to act very significant or long parts in it, (which, of itself, I think a fault;) such lessons, I say, do they give to the footmen's gallery, that I have not wondered we have so few modest or good men-servants among those who often attend their masters or mistresses to plays. Then how miserably evident must that poet's conscious want of genius be, who can stoop to raise or give force to a clap by the indiscriminate roar of the party-coloured gallery!

But this subject I will suspend to a better opportunity; that is to say, to the happy one, when my nuptials with my

Clarissa will oblige me to increase the number of my servants, and of consequence to enter more nicely into their qualifications.

Although I have the highest opinion that man can have of the generosity of my dear Miss Harlowe, yet I cannot for the heart of me account for this agreeable change in her temper but one way. Faith and troth, Belford, I verily believe, laying all circumstances together, that the dear creature unexpectedly finds herself in the way I have so ardently wished her to be in; and that this makes her, at last, incline to favour me, that she may set the better face upon her gestation, when at her father's.

If this be the case, all her falling away, and her fainting fits, are charmingly accounted for. Nor is it surprising, that such a sweet novice in these matters should not, for some time, have known to what to attribute her frequent indispositions. If this should be the case, how shall I laugh at *thee!* and (when I am sure of her) at the dear novice *herself*, that all her grievous distresses shall end in a man-child; which I shall love better than all the cherubims and seraphims that may come after; though there were to be as many of them as I beheld in my dream; in which a vast expanse of firmament was stuck as full of them as it could hold!

I shall be afraid to open thy next, lest it bring me the account of poor Belton's death. Yet, as there are no hopes of his recovery—but what should I say, unless the poor man were better fitted—but thy heavy sermon shall not affect me too much neither.

I enclose thy papers; and do thou transcribe them for me, or return them; for there are some things in them, which, at a proper season, a *mortal* man should not avoid

attending to; and thou seemest to have entered deeply into the shocking subject.—But here I will end, lest I grow too serious.

Thy servant called here about an hour ago, to know if I had any commands; I therefore hope that thou wilt have this early in the morning. And if thou *canst* let me hear from thee, do. I'll stretch an hour or two in expectation of it. Yet I must be at Lord M.'s to-morrow night, if possible, though ever so late.

Thy fellow tells me the poor man is much as he was when Mowbray left him.

Wouldst thou think that this varlet Mowbray is sorry that I am so near being happy with Miss Harlowe? And, 'egad, Jack, I know not what to say to it, now the fruit seems to be within my reach—but let what will come, I'll stand to't: for I find I can't live without her.

LETTER LXIII.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday, Three o'clock.

I will proceed where I left off in my last.

As soon as I had seen Mowbray mounted, I went to attend upon poor Belton; whom I found in dreadful agonies, in which he awoke, as he generally does.

The doctor came in presently after, and I was concerned at the scene that passed between them.

It opened with the dying man's asking him, with melan-

choly earnestness, if nothing—if nothing at all could be done for him ?

The doctor shook his head, and told him, he doubted not.

I *cannot* die, said the poor man—I cannot *think* of dying. I am very desirous of living a little longer, if I could but be free from these horrible pains in my stomach and head. Can you give me nothing to make me pass one week—but *one* week, in tolerable ease, that I may die like a man, if I *must* die !

But, Doctor, I am *yet* a young man; in the prime of my years—youth is a good subject for a physician to work upon—Can you do nothing—nothing *at all* for me, Doctor ?

Alas ! Sir, replied his physician, you have been long in a bad way. I fear, I fear, nothing in physic can help you !

He was then out of all patience : What, then, is your art, Sir?—I have been a passive machine for a whole twelvemonth, to be wrought upon at the pleasure of you people of the faculty.—I verily believe, had I not taken such doses of nasty stuff, I had been now a well man—But who the plague would regard physicians, whose art is to cheat us with hopes while they help to destroy us ?—And who, not one of you, know any thing but by guess ?

Sir, continued he, fiercely, (and with more strength of voice and coherence, than he had shown for several hours before,) if you give *me* over, I give *you* over.—The only honest and certain part of the art of healing is surgery. A good surgeon is worth a thousand of you. I have been in surgeons' hands often, and have always found reason to depend upon their skill ; but *your* art, Sir, what is it ?—but to daub, daub, daub ; load, load, load ; plaster, plaster, plaster; till ye utterly destroy the appetite first, and the con-

stitution afterwards, which you are called in to help. I had a companion once, my dear Belford, thou knewest honest Blomer, as pretty a physician he would have made as any in England, had he kept himself from excess in wine and women; and he always used to say, there was nothing at all but pick-pocket parade in the physician's art; and that the best guesser was the best physician. And I used to believe him too—and yet, fond of life, and fearful of death, what do we do, when we are taken ill, but call *ye* in? And what do *ye* do, when called in, but nurse our distempers, till from pigmies you make giants of them? and then ye come creeping with solemn faces, when ye are ashamed to prescribe, or when the stomach won't bear its natural food, by reason of your poisonous potions,—*Alas! I am afraid physic can do no more for him!*—Nor need it, when it has brought to the brink of the grave the poor wretch who placed all his reliance in your cursed slops, and the flattering hopes you gave him.

The doctor was out of countenance; but said, if we could make mortal men *immortal*, and *would not*, all this might be just.

I blamed the poor man; yet excused him to the physician. To die, dear Doctor, when, like my poor friend, we are so desirous of life, is a melancholy thing. We are apt to hope too much, not considering that the seeds of death are sown in us when we begin to live, and grow up, till, like rampant weeds, they choke the tender flower of life; which declines in us as those weeds flourish. We ought, therefore, to begin early to study what our constitutions will bear, in order to root out, by temperance, the weeds which the soil is most apt to produce; or, at least, to keep them down as they rise; and not, when the flower or plant is withered at the root, and the weed in its full vigour, ex-

pect, that the medical art will restore the one, or destroy the other; when that other, as I hinted, has been rooting itself in the habit from the time of our birth.

This speech, Bob., thou wilt call a *prettiness;* but the allegory is just; and thou hast not quite cured me of the metaphorical.

Very true, said the doctor; you have brought a good metaphor to illustrate the thing. I am sorry I can do nothing for the gentleman; and can only recommend patience, and a better frame of mind.

Well, Sir, said the poor angry man, vexed at the doctor, but more at death, you will perhaps recommend the next in succession to the physician, when *he* can do no more; and, I suppose, will send your brother to pray by me for those virtues which you wish me.

It seems the physician's brother is a clergyman in the neighbourhood.

I was greatly concerned to see the gentleman thus treated; and so I told poor Belton when he was gone; but he continued impatient, and would not be denied, he said, the liberty of talking to a man, who had taken so many guineas of him for doing nothing, or worse than nothing, and never declined one, though he knew all the time he could do him no good.

It seems the gentleman, though rich, is noted for being greedy after fees! and poor Belton went on raving at the extravagant fees of English physicians, compared with those of the most eminent foreign ones. But, poor man! he, like the Turks, who judge of a general by his success, (out of patience to think he must die,) would have worshipped the doctor, and not grudged three times the sum, could he have given him hopes of recovery.

But, nevertheless, I must needs say, that gentlemen of

the faculty should be more moderate in their fees, or take more pains to deserve them; for, generally, they only come into a room, feel the sick man's pulse, ask the nurse a few questions, inspect the patient's tongue, and, perhaps, his water; then sit down, look plaguy wise, and *write*. The golden fee finds the ready hand, and they hurry away, as if the sick man's room were infectious. So to the next they troll, and to the next, if men of great practice; valuing themselves upon the number of visits they make in a morning, and the little time they make them in. They go to dinner and unload their pockets; and sally out again to refill them. And thus, in a little time, they raise vast estates; for, as Ratcliffe said, when first told of a great loss which befell him, It was only going up and down one hundred pair of stairs to fetch it up.

Mrs. Sambre (Belton's sister) had several times proposed to him a minister to pray by him, but the poor man could not, he said, bear the thoughts of one; for that he should certainly die in an hour or two after; and he was willing to hope still, against all probability, that he might recover; and was often asking his sister if she had not seen people as bad as he was, who, almost to a miracle, when every body gave them over, had got up again?

She, shaking her head, told him she had; but, once saying, that *their* disorders were of an acute kind, and such as had a crisis in them, he called her *Small-hopes*, and *Job's comforter;* and bid her say *nothing*, if she could not say more to the purpose, and what was *fitter* for a sick man to hear. And yet, poor fellow, he has no hopes himself, as is plain by his desponding terrors; one of which he fell into, and a very dreadful one, soon after the doctor went.

Wednesday, Nine o'clock at Night.

THE poor man has been in convulsions, terrible convulsions! for an hour past. O Lord! Lovelace, death is a shocking thing! by my faith it is!—I wish thou wert present on this occasion. It is not merely the concern a man has for his friend; but, as death is the common lot, we see, in *his* agonies, how it will be one day with ourselves. I am all over as if cold water were poured down my back, or as if I had a strong ague-fit upon me. I was obliged to come away. And I write, hardly knowing what.—I wish *thou* wert here.

THOUGH I left him, because I could stay no longer, I can't be easy by myself, but must go to him again.

Eleven o'clock.

POOR Belton!—Drawing on apace! Yet was he sensible when I went in—too sensible, poor man! He has something upon his mind to reveal, he tells me, that is the worst action of his life; worse than ever you or I knew of him, he says. It *must* be then very bad!

He ordered every body out; but was seized with another convulsion-fit, before he could reveal it; and in it he lies struggling between life and death—but I'll go in again.

One o'clock in the Morning.

ALL now must soon be over with him: Poor, poor fellow! He has given me some hints of what he wanted to say; but all incoherent, interrupted by dying hiccoughs and convulsions.

Bad enough it must be, Heaven knows, by what I can gather!—Alas! Lovelace, I fear, I fear, he came *too soon* into his uncle's estate.

If a man were to live always, he might have some temptation to do base things, in order to procure to himself, as it would then be, *everlasting* ease, plenty, or affluence ; but, for the sake of ten, twenty, thirty years of poor life to be a villain—Can that be worth while ? with a conscience stinging him all the time too ! And when he comes to wind up all, such agonizing reflections upon his past guilt! All then appearing as nothing! What he most valued, most disgustful ! and not one thing to think of, as the poor fellow says twenty and twenty times over, but what is attended with anguish and reproach ! ——

To hear the poor man wish he had never been born !— To hear him pray to be nothing after death ! Good God ! how shocking !

By his incoherent hints, I am afraid 'tis very bad with him. No pardon, no mercy, he repeats, can lie for him !

I hope I shall make a proper use of this lesson. Laugh at me if thou wilt; but never, never more, will I take the liberties I have taken ; but whenever I am tempted, will think of Belton's dying agonies, and what my own may be.

Thursday, Three in the Morning.

He is now at the last gasp—rattles in the throat—has a new convulsion every minute almost ! What horror is he in ! His eyes look like breath-stained glass ! They roll ghastly no more ; are quite set ; his face distorted, and drawn out, by his sinking jaws, and erected staring eyebrows, with his lengthened furrowed forehead, to double its usual length, as it seems. It is not, it cannot be the face of Belton, thy Belton, and my Belton, whom we have beheld with so much delight over the social bottle, comparing notes, that one day may be brought against us, and

make *us* groan, as they very lately did *him*—that is to say, while he had strength to groan; for now his voice is not to be heard; all inward, lost; not so much as speaking by his eyes; yet, strange! how can it be? the bed rocking under him like a cradle.

Four o'clock.

Alas! he's gone! that groan, that *dreadful* groan,
Was the last farewell of the parting mind!
The struggling soul has bid a long adieu
To its late mansion—Fled! Ah! whither fled?

Now is all indeed over!—Poor, poor Belton! by this time thou knowest if thy crimes were above the size of God's mercies! Now are every one's cares and attendance at an end! now do we, thy friends,—poor Belton!—know the worst of thee, as to this life! Thou art released from insufferable tortures both of body and mind! may those tortures, and thy repentance, expiate for thy offences, and mayest thou be happy to all eternity!

We are told, that God desires not the death, the *spiritual* death of a sinner: And 'tis certain, that thou didst deeply repent! I hope, therefore, as thou wert not cut off in the midst of thy sins by the sword of injured friendship, which more than once thou hadst braved, [the dreadfullest of all deaths, next to suicide, because it gives no opportunity for repentance] that this is a merciful earnest that thy penitence is accepted; and that thy long illness, and dreadful agonies in the last stages of it, were thy only punishment.

I wish indeed, I *heartily* wish, we could have seen one ray of comfort darting in upon his benighted mind, before he departed. But all, alas! to the very last gasp, was horror and confusion. And my only fear arises from this,

that, till within the four last days of his life, he could not be brought to think he should die, though in a visible decline for months; and, in that presumption, was too little inclined to set about a serious preparation for a journey, which he hoped he should not be obliged to take; and when he began to apprehend that he could not put it off, his impatience, and terror, and apprehension, showed too little of that reliance and resignation, which afford the most comfortable reflections to the *friends* of the dying, as well as to the *dying* themselves.

But we must leave poor Belton to that mercy, of which we have all so much need; and, for my own part (do you, Lovelace, and the rest of the fraternity, as ye will) I am resolved, I will endeavour to begin to repent of my follies while my health is sound, my intellects untouched, and while it is in my power to make some atonement, as near to restitution or reparation, as is possible, to those I have wronged or misled. And do ye *outwardly*, and from a point of *false bravery*, make as light as ye will of my resolution, as ye are none of ye of the class of abandoned and stupid sots who endeavour to disbelieve the future existence of which ye are afraid, I am sure you will justify me in your *hearts*, if not by your *practices;* and one day you will wish you had joined with me in the same resolution, and will confess there is more good sense in it, than now perhaps you will own.

Seven o'clock, Thursday Morning.

You are very earnest, by your last letter (just given me) to hear again from me, before you set out for Berks. I will therefore close with a few words upon the *only* subject in your letter which I can at present touch upon: and this is the letter of which you give me a copy from the lady.

Want of rest, and the sad scene I have before my eyes, have rendered me altogether incapable of accounting for the contents of it in any shape. You are in ecstasies upon it. You have reason to be so, if it be as you think. Nor would I rob you of your joy: but I must say that I am amazed at it.

Surely, Lovelace, this surprising letter cannot be a forgery of thy own, in order to carry on some view, and to impose upon me. Yet, by the style of it, it cannot; though thou art a perfect Proteus too.

I will not, however, add another word, after I have desired the return of this, and have told you that I am

Your true friend, and well-wisher,

J. BELFORD.

LETTER LXIV.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Aug. 24, Thursday Morn.

I RECEIVED thy letter in such good time, by thy fellow's dispatch, that it gives me an opportunity of throwing in a few paragraphs upon it. I read a passage or two of it to Mowbray; and we both agree that thou art an absolute master of the lamentable.

Poor Belton! what terrible conflicts were thy last conflicts!—I hope, however, that he is happy: and I have the more hope, because the hardness of his death is likely to be such a warning to *thee*. If it have the effect thou declarest it shall have, what a world of mischief will it prevent! how much good will it do! how many poor

wretches will rejoice at the *occasion*, (if they know it,) however melancholy in itself, which shall bring them in a compensation for injuries they had been forced to sit down contented with! But, Jack, though thy uncle's death has made thee a rich fellow, art thou sure that the making good of such a vow will not totally bankrupt thee?

Thou sayest I may laugh at thee, if I will. Not I, Jack: I do not take it to be a laughing subject: and I am heartily concerned at the loss we all have in poor Belton: and when I get a little settled, and have leisure to contemplate the vanity of all sublunary things (a subject that will now-and-then, in my gayest hours, obtrude itself upon me) it is very likely that I may talk seriously with thee upon these topics; and, if thou hast not got too much the start of me in the repentance thou art entering upon, will go hand-in-hand with thee in it. If thou hast, thou wilt let me just keep thee in my eye; for it is an up-hill work; and I shall see thee, at setting out, at a great distance; but as thou art a much heavier and clumsier fellow than myself, I hope that without much puffing and sweating, only keeping on a good round dog-trot, I shall be able to overtake thee.

Mean time, take back thy letter, as thou desirest. I would not have it in my pocket upon any account at present; nor read it once more.

I am going down without seeing my beloved. I was a hasty fool to write her a letter, promising that I would not come near her till I saw her at her father's. For as she is now actually at Smith's, and I so near her, one short visit could have done no harm.

I sent Will., two hours ago, with my grateful compliments, and to know how she does.

How must I adore this charming creature! for I am

ready to think my servant a happier fellow than myself, for having been within a pair of stairs and an apartment of her.

Mowbray and I will drop a tear a-piece, as we ride along, to the memory of poor Belton:—*as we ride along*, I say: for we shall have so much joy when we arrive at Lord M.'s, and when I communicate to him and my cousins the dear creature's letter, that we shall forget every thing grievous: since now their family-hopes in my reformation (the point which lies so near their hearts) will all revive; it being an article of their faith, that, if I marry, repentance and mortification will follow of course.

Neither Mowbray nor I shall accept of thy *verbal* invitation to the funeral. We like not these dismal formalities. And as to the respect that is supposed to be shown to the memory of a deceased friend in such an attendance, why should we do any thing to reflect upon those who have made it a fashion to leave this parade to people whom they *hire for that purpose?*

Adieu, and be cheerful. Thou canst now do no more for poor Belton, wert thou to howl for him to the end of thy life.

LETTER LXV.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Sat. Aug. 26.

On Thursday afternoon I assisted at the opening of poor Belton's will, in which he has left me his sole executor, and bequeathed me a legacy of an hundred guineas; which

I shall present to his unfortunate sister, to whom he has not been so kind as I think he ought to have been. He has also left twenty pounds a-piece to Mowbray, Tourville, thyself, and me, for a ring to be worn in remembrance of him.

After I had given some particular orders about the preparations to be made for his funeral, I went to town ; but having made it late before I got in on Thursday night, and being fatigued for want of rest several nights before, and now in my spirits, [I could not help it, Lovelace!] I contented myself to send my compliments to the innocent sufferer, to inquire after her health.

My servant saw Mrs. Smith, who told him, she was very glad I was come to town; for that the lady was worse than she had yet been.

It is impossible to account for the contents of her letter to you ; or to reconcile those contents to the facts I have to communicate.

I was at Smith's by seven yesterday (Friday) morning ; and found that the lady was just gone in a chair to St. Dunstan's to prayers : she was too ill to get out by six to Covent-garden church ; and was forced to be supported to her chair by Mrs. Lovick. They would have persuaded her against going ; but she said she knew not but it would be her last opportunity. Mrs. Lovick, dreading that she would be taken worse at church, walked thither before her.

Mrs. Smith told me she was so ill on Wednesday night, that she had desired to receive the sacrament ; and accordingly it was administered to her, by the parson of the parish : whom she besought to take all opportunities of assisting her in her solemn preparation.

This the gentleman promised : and called in the morning to inquire after her health ; and was admitted at the first

word. He staid with her about half an hour; and when he came down, with his face turned aside, and a faltering accent, 'Mrs. Smith,' said he, 'you have an angel in your 'house.—I will attend her again in the evening, as she 'desires, and as often as I think it will be agreeable to 'her.'

Her increased weakness she attributed to the fatigues she had undergone by your means; and to a letter she had received from her sister, which she answered the same day.

Mrs. Smith told me that two different persons had called there, one on Thursday morning, one in the evening, to inquire after her state of health; and seemed as if commissioned from her relations for that purpose; but asked not to see her, only were very inquisitive after her visiters: (particularly, it seems, after *me:* What could they mean by that?) after her way of life, and expenses; and one of them inquired after her manner of supporting them; to the latter of which, Mrs. Smith said, she had answered, as the truth was, that she had been obliged to sell some of her clothes, and was actually about parting with more; at which the inquirist (a grave old farmer-looking man) held up his hands, and said, Good God!—this will be sad, sad news to somebody! I believe I must not mention it. But Mrs. Smith says she desired he *would*, let him come from he would. He shook his head, and said if she died, the flower of the world would be gone, and the family she belonged to would be no more than a common family*. I was pleased with the man's expression.

You may be curious to know how she passed her time, when she was obliged to leave her lodging to avoid you.

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* This man came from her cousin Morden; as will be seen hereafter, Letter XCIV. of this volume; and Vol. VIII. Letter I.

Mrs. Smith tells me ‘ that she was very ill when she ‘ went out on Monday morning, and sighed as if her heart ‘ would break as she came down stairs, and as she went ‘ through the shop into the coach, her nurse with her, as ‘ you had informed me before: that she ordered the ‘ coachman (whom she hired for the day) to drive any ‘ where, so it was into the air: he accordingly drove her ‘ to Hampstead, and thence to Highgate. There at the ‘ Bowling-green House, she alighted, extremely ill, and ‘ having breakfasted, ordered the coachman to drive very ‘ slowly any where. He crept along to Muswell-hill, and ‘ put up at a public house there; where she employed ‘ herself two hours in writing, though exceedingly weak ‘ and low, till the dinner she had ordered was brought in: ‘ she endeavoured to eat, but could not: her appetite was ‘ gone, quite gone, she said. And then she wrote on for ‘ three hours more: after which, being heavy, she dozed ‘ a little in an elbow-chair. When she awoke, she or- ‘ dered the coachman to drive her very slowly to town, to ‘ the house of a friend of Mrs. Lovick; whom, as agreed ‘ upon, she met there: but, being extremely ill, she ‘ would venture home at a late hour, although she heard ‘ from the widow that you had been there; and had rea- ‘ son to be shocked at your behaviour. She said she ‘ found there was no avoiding you: she was apprehensive ‘ she should not live many hours, and it was not impos- ‘ sible but the shock the sight of you must give her would ‘ determine her fate in your presence.

‘ She accordingly went home. She heard the relation ‘ of your astonishing vagaries, with hands and eyes often ‘ lifted up; and with these words intermingled, Shocking ‘ creature! incorrigible wretch! And will nothing make ‘ him serious? And not being able to bear the thoughts of

'an interview with a man so hardened, she took to her 'usual chair early in the morning, and was carried to 'the Temple-stairs, where she had ordered her nurse 'before her, to get a pair of oars in readiness (for her 'fatigues the day before made her unable to bear a coach;) 'and then she was rowed to Chelsea, where she break-'fasted; and after rowing about, put in at the Swan at 'Brentford-ait, where she dined; and would have 'written, but had no conveniency either of tolerable pens, 'or ink, or private room; and then proceeding to Rich-'mond, they rowed her back to Mortlake; where she 'put in, and drank tea at a house her watermen recom-'mended to her. She wrote there for an hour; and re-'turned to the Temple; and, when she landed, made one 'of the watermen get her a chair, and so was carried to 'the widow's friend, as the night before; where she 'again met the widow, who informed her that you had 'been after her twice that day.

'Mrs. Lovick gave her there her sister's letter*; and 'she was so much affected with the contents of it, that she 'was twice very nigh fainting away; and wept bitterly, 'as Mrs. Lovick told Mrs. Smith; dropping some warmer 'expressions than ever they had heard proceed from her 'lips, in relation to her friends; calling them cruel, and 'complaining of ill offices done her, and of vile reports 'raised against her.

'While she was thus disturbed, Mrs. Smith came to 'her, and told her, that you had been there a third 'time, and was just gone, (at half an hour after nine,) 'having left word how civil and respectful you would

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* See Letter LXVIII. of this volume.

'be; but that you was determined to see her at all 'events.

'She said it was hard she could not be permitted to 'die in peace: that her lot was a severe one: that she 'began to be afraid she should not forbear repining, and 'to think her punishment greater than her fault: but, 'recalling herself immediately, she comforted herself, 'that her life would be short, and with the assurance of a 'better.'

By what I have mentioned, you will conclude with me, that the letter brought her by Mrs. Lovick (the superscription of which you saw to be written in her sister's hand) could not be the letter on the contents of which she grounded *that* she wrote to you, on her return home. And yet neither Mrs. Lovick, nor Mrs. Smith, nor the servant of the latter, know of any other brought her. But as the women assured me, that she actually *did* write to you, I was eased of a suspicion which I had begun to entertain, that you (for some purpose I could not guess at) had forged the letter from her of which you sent me a copy.

On Wednesday morning, when she received your letter in answer to her's, she said, Necessity may well be called the mother of invention—but calamity is the test of integrity.—I hope I have not taken an inexcusable step—And there she stopt a minute or two; and then said, I shall now, perhaps, be allowed to die in peace.

I staid till she came in. She was glad to see me; but, being very weak, said, she must sit down before she could go up stairs: and so went into the back-shop; leaning upon Mrs. Lovick: and when she had sat down, 'I am 'glad to see you, Mr. Belford, said she; I *must* say so— 'let mis-reporters say what they will.'

I wondered at this expression*; but would not interrupt her.

O Sir, said she, I have been grievously harassed. Your friend, who would not let me live with reputation, will not permit me to die in peace. You see how I am. Is there not a great alteration in me within this week! but 'tis all for the better. Yet were I to wish for life, I must say that your friend, your barbarous friend, has *hurt* me greatly.

She was so weak, so short breathed, and her words and actions so very moving, that I was forced to walk from her; the two women and her nurse turning away their faces also, weeping.

I have had, Madam, said I, since I saw you, a most shocking scene before my eyes for days together. My poor friend Belton is no more. He quitted the world yesterday morning in such dreadful agonies, that the impression they have left upon me have *so weakened* my mind—

I was loth to have her think that my grief was owing to the weak state I saw her in, for fear of dispiriting her.

That is only, Mr. Belford, interrupted she, in order to *strengthen* it, if a proper use he made of the impression. But I should be glad, since you are so humanely affected with the solemn circumstance, that you could have written an account of it to your gay friend, in the style and manner you are master of. Who knows, as it would have come *from* an associate, and *of* an associate, how it might have affected him?

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* Explained in Letter LXX. of this volume.

That I *had* done, I told her, in such a manner as had, I believed, some effect upon you.

His behaviour in this honest family so lately, said she, and his cruel pursuit of me, give but little hope that any thing serious or solemn will affect him.

We had some talk about Belton's dying behaviour, and I gave her several particulars of the poor man's impatience and despair; to which she was very attentive; and made fine observations upon the subject of procrastination.

A letter and packet were brought her by a man on horseback from Miss Howe, while we were talking. She retired up stairs to read it; and, while I was in discourse with Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick, the doctor and apothecary both came in together. They confirmed to me my fears, as to the dangerous way she is in. They had both been apprized of the new instances of implacableness in her friends, and of your persecutions: and the doctor said he would not for the world be either the unforgiving father of that lady, or the man who had brought her to this distress. Her heart's broken: she'll die, said he: there is no saving her. But how, were I either the one or the other of the people I have named, I should support myself afterwards, I cannot tell.

When she was told we were all three together, she desired us to walk up. She arose to receive us, and after answering two or three general questions relating to her health, she addressed herself to us, to the following effect:

As I may not, said she, see you three gentlemen together again, let me take this opportunity to acknowlege my obligations to you all. I am inexpressibly obliged to you, Sir, and to you, Sir, [courtesying to the doctor and to

Mr. Goddard] for your *more* than friendly, your *paternal* care and concern for me. Humanity in your profession, I dare say, is far from being a rare qualification, because you are gentlemen *by* your profession: but so much kindness, so much humanity, did never desolate creature meet with, as I have met with from you both. But indeed I have always observed, that where a person relies upon Providence, it never fails to raise up a new friend for every old one that falls off.

This gentleman, [bowing to me,] who, some people think, should have been one of the last I should have thought of for my executor—is, nevertheless, (such is the strange turn that things have taken!) the only one I can choose; and therefore I have chosen him for that charitable office, and he has been so good as to accept of it: for, rich as I may boast myself to be, I am rather so in *right* than in *fact*, at this present. I repeat, therefore, my humble thanks to you all three, and beg of God to return to you and yours [looking to each] an hundred-fold, the kindness and favour you have shown me; and that it may be in the power of you and of yours, to the end of time, to *confer* benefits, rather than to be obliged to *receive* them. This is a godlike power, gentlemen: I once rejoiced in it in some little degree; and much more in the prospect I had of its being enlarged to me; though I have had the mortification to experience the reverse, and to be obliged almost to every body I have seen or met with: but all, originally, through my own fault; so I ought to bear the punishment without repining: and I hope I do. Forgive these impertinencies: a grateful heart, that wants the power it wishes for, to express itself suitably to its own impulses, will be at a loss what properly to dictate to the tongue; and yet, unable to restrain its overflowings, will

force the tongue to say weak and silly things, rather than appear ungratefully silent. Once more, then, I thank ye all three for your kindness to me: and God Almighty make you that amends which at present I cannot!

She retired from us to her closet with her eyes full; and left us looking upon one another.

We had hardly recovered ourselves, when she, quite easy, cheerful, and smiling, returned to us: Doctor, said she (seeing we had been moved) you will excuse me for the concern I give you; and so will you, Mr. Goddard, and you, Mr. Belford; for 'tis a concern that only generous natures can show: and to such natures *sweet* is the pain, if I may so say, that attends such a concern. But as I have some few preparations still to make, and would not (though in ease of Mr. Belford's future cares, which is, and ought to be, part of my study) undertake more than it is likely I shall have time lent me to perform, I would beg of you to give me your opinions [you see my way of living, and you may be assured that I will do nothing wilfully to shorten my life] how long it may possibly be, before I may hope to be released from all my troubles.

They both hesitated, and looked upon each other. Don't be afraid to answer me, said she, each sweet hand pressing upon the arm of each gentleman, with that mingled freedom and reserve, which virgin modesty, mixed with conscious dignity, can only express, and with a look serenely earnest, tell me how long you think I may hold it! and believe me, gentlemen, the shorter you tell me my time is likely to be, the more comfort you will give me.

With what pleasing woe, said the Doctor, do you fill the minds of those who have the happiness to converse

with you, and see the happy frame you are in! what you have undergone within a few days past has much hurt you: and should you have fresh troubles of those kinds, I could not be answerable for your holding it—And there he paused.

How long, Doctor?—I believe I *shall* have a little more ruffling—I am afraid I shall—but there can happen only one thing that I shall not be tolerably easy under—How long then, Sir?—

He was silent.

A fortnight, Sir?

He was still silent.

Ten days?—A week?—How long, Sir? with smiling earnestness.

If I *must* speak, Madam, if you have not better treatment than you have lately met with, I am afraid—There again he stopt.

Afraid of what, Doctor? don't be afraid—How long, Sir?

That a fortnight or three weeks may deprive the world of the finest flower in it.

A fortnight or three weeks yet, Doctor?—But God's will be done! I shall, however, by this means, have full time, if I have but strength and intellect, to do all that is now upon my mind to do. And so, Sirs, I can but once more thank you [turning to each of us] for all your goodness to me; and, having letters to write, will take up no more of your time—Only, Doctor, be pleased to order me some more of those drops: they cheer me a little, when I am low; and putting a fee into his unwilling hand—You know the terms, Sir!—Then, turning to Mr. Goddard, you'll be so good, Sir, as to look in upon me to-night or to-morrow, as you have opportunity: and you, Mr. Bel-

ford, I know, will be desirous to set out to prepare for the last office for your late friend: so I wish you a good journey, and hope to see you when that is performed.

She then retired with a cheerful and serene air. The two gentlemen went away together. I went down to the women, and, inquiring, found, that Mrs. Lovick was this day to bring her twenty guineas more, for some other of her apparel.

The widow told me that she had taken the liberty to expostulate with her upon the *occasion* she had for raising this money, to such great disadvantage; and it produced the following short and affecting conversation between them.

None of my friends will wear any thing of mine, said she. I shall leave a great many good things behind me.—And as to what I want the money for—don't be surprised: —But suppose I want it to purchase a house?

You are all mystery, Madam. I don't comprehend you.

Why, then Mrs. Lovick, I will explain myself.—I have a man, not a woman, for my executor: and think you that I will leave to his care any thing that concerns my own person?—Now, Mrs. Lovick, smiling, do you comprehend me?

Mrs. Lovick wept.

O fie! proceeded the Lady, drying up her tears with her own handkerchief, and giving her a kiss—Why this kind weakness for one with whom you have been so little awhile acquainted? Dear, good Mrs. Lovick, don't be concerned for me on a prospect with which I have occasion to be pleased; but go to-morrow to your friends, and bring me the money they have agreed to give you.

Thus, Lovelace, it is plain that she means to bespeak her *last* house! Here's presence of mind; here's tranquillity of heart, on the most affecting occasion—This is magnanimity indeed!—Couldst thou, or could I, with all our boisterous bravery, and offensive false courage, act thus?—Poor Belton! how unlike was thy behaviour!

Mrs. Lovick tells me that the lady spoke of a letter she had received from her favourite divine Dr. Lewen, in the time of my absence; and of an answer she had returned to it. But Mrs. Lovick knows not the contents of either.

When thou receivest the letter I am now writing, thou wilt see what will soon be the end of all thy injuries to this divine lady. I say *when thou receivest it;* for I will delay it for some little time, lest thou shouldest take it into thy head (under pretence of resenting the disappointment her letter must give thee) to molest her again.

This letter having detained me by its length, I shall not now set out for Epsom till to-morrow.

I should have mentioned that the lady explained to me what the *one thing* was that she was afraid might happen to ruffle her. It was the apprehension of what may result from a visit which Col. Morden, as she is informed, designs to make *you*.

LETTER LXVI.

THE REV. DR. LEWEN, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

Friday, Aug. 18.

PRESUMING, dearest and ever-respectable young lady, upon your former favour, and upon your opinion of my judgment and sincerity, I cannot help addressing you by a few lines on your present unhappy situation.

I will not look back upon the measures into which you have either been *led* or *driven*. But will only say as to *those*, that I think you are the least to blame of any young lady that was ever reduced from happy to unhappy circumstances; and I have not been wanting to say as much, where I hoped my freedom would have been better received than I have had the mortification to find it to be.

What I principally write for now is, to put you upon doing a piece of justice to yourself, and to your sex, in the prosecuting for his life (I am assured his life is in your power) the most profligate and abandoned of men, as *he* must be, who could act so basely, as I understand Mr. Lovelace has acted by you.

I am very ill; and am now forced to write upon my pillow; my thoughts confused; and incapable of method: I shall not therefore aim at method: but to give you in general my opinion—and that is, that your religion, your duty to your family, the duty you owe to your honour, and even charity to your sex, oblige you to give public evidence against this very wicked man.

And let me add another consideration: The prevention, by this means, of the mischiefs that may otherwise happen between your brother and Mr. Lovelace, or between the

latter and your cousin Morden, who is now, I hear, arrived, and resolves to have justice done you.

A consideration which ought to affect your conscience, [forgive me, dearest young lady, I think I am now in the way of my duty:] and to be of more concern to you, than that hard pressure upon your modesty which I know the appearance against him in an open court must be of to such a lady as you; and which, I conceive, will be your great difficulty. But I know, Madam, that you have dignity enough to *become* the blushes of the most naked truth, when necessity, justice, and honour, exact it from you. Rakes and ravishers would meet with encouragement *indeed*, and most from those who had the greatest abhorrence of their actions, if violated modesty were never to complain of the injury it received from the villanous attempters of it.

In a word, the reparation of your family dishonour now rests in your own bosom: and which only one of these two alternatives *can* repair; to wit, either to marry the offender, or to prosecute him at law. Bitter expedients for a soul so delicate as your's!

He, and all his friends, I understand, solicit you to the first: and it is certainly, now, all the amends within his power to make. But I am assured that you have rejected *their* solicitations, and *his*, with the indignation and contempt that his foul actions have deserved: but yet, that you refuse not to extend to him the christian forgiveness he has so little reason to expect, provided he will not disturb you farther.

But, Madam, the prosecution I advise, will not let your present and future exemption from fresh disturbance from so vile a molester depend upon his *courtesy:* I should

think so noble and so rightly-guided a spirit as your's would not permit that it should, if you could help it.

And can indignities of any kind be *properly pardoned* till we have it in *our power to punish them?* To pretend to pardon, while we are labouring under the pain or dishonour of them, will be thought by some to be but the vaunted mercy of a pusillanimous heart, trembling to resent them. The remedy I propose is a severe one: But what pain can be more severe than the injury? Or how will injuries be believed to grieve us, that are never honourably complained of?

I am sure Miss Clarissa Harlowe, however injured and oppressed, remains unshaken in her sentiments of honour and virtue: and although she would sooner die than *deserve* that her modesty should be drawn into question; yet she will think no truth immodest that is to be uttered in the vindicated cause of innocence and chastity. Little, very little difference is there, my dear young lady, between a *suppressed* evidence, and a *false* one.

It is a terrible circumstance, I once more own, for a young lady of your delicacy to be under the obligation of telling so shocking a story in public court: but it is still a worse imputation, that she should pass over so mortal an injury unresented.

Conscience, honour, justice, are on your side: and modesty would, by some, be thought but an empty name, should you *refuse* to obey their dictates.

I have been consulted, I own, on this subject. I have given it as my opinion, that you ought to prosecute the abandoned man—but without my reasons. These I reserved, with a resolution to lay them before you unknown to any body, that the result, if what I wish, may be *your own.*

I will only add that the misfortunes which have befallen you, had they been the lot of a child of my own, could not have affected me *more* than your's have done. My own child I love: but I both love and honour you: since to love you, is to love virtue, good sense, prudence, and every thing that is good and noble in woman.

Wounded as I think all these are by the injuries you have received, you will believe that the knowledge of your distresses must have afflicted, beyond what I am able to express,

Your sincere admirer, and humble servant,

ARTHUR LEWEN.

I just now understand that your sister will, by proper authority, propose this prosecution to you. I humbly persume that the reason why you resolved not upon this step *from the first*, was, that you did not know that it would have the *countenance and support of your relations*.

LETTER LXVII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO THE REV. DR. LEWEN.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR, Sat. Aug. 19.

I THOUGHT, till I received your affectionate and welcome letter, that I had neither father, uncle, brother left; nor hardly a friend among my former favourers of your sex. Yet, knowing *you* so well, and having no reason to upbraid myself with a faulty will, I was to blame, (even

although I had doubted the continuance of your good opinion,) to decline the trial whether I had forfeited it or not; and if I had, whether I could not *honourably* reinstate myself in it.

But, Sir, it was owing to different causes that I did not; partly to *shame*, to think how high, in my happier days, I stood in your esteem, and how much I must be sunk in it, since those so much nearer in relation to me gave me up; partly to *deep distress*, which makes the humbled heart diffident; and made mine afraid to claim the kindred mind in your's, which would have supplied to me in some measure all the dear and lost relations I have named.

Then, so loth, as I sometimes was, to be thought to want to make a *party* against those whom both duty and inclination bid me reverence: so long *trailed* on between *hope and doubt:* so *little my own mistress* at one time; so fearful of *making or causing mischief* at another; and not being encouraged to hope, by *your kind notice*, that my application to you would be acceptable:—apprehending that my relations had engaged your *silence* at least*—These—But why these unavailing retrospections now?—I *was* to be unhappy—in order to *be* happy; that is my hope!—Resigning therefore to that hope, I will, without any further preamble, write a few lines, (if writing to *you*, I can write *but* a few,) in answer to the subject of your kind letter.

Permit me, then, to say, That I believe your arguments

* The stiff visit this good divine was prevailed upon to make her, as mentioned Vol. II. Letter XXX. (of which, however, she was too generous to remind him) might warrant the lady to think that he had rather inclined to their party, as to the *parental side*, than to her's.

would have been unanswerable in almost every *other* case of this nature, but in that of the unhappy *Clarissa Harlowe*.

It is certain that creatures who cannot stand the shock of *public shame*, should be doubly careful how they expose themselves to the danger of incurring *private guilt*, which may possibly bring them to it. But as to *myself*, suppose there were no objections from the declining way I am in as to my health; and supposing I could have prevailed upon myself to appear against this man; were there not room to apprehend that the end so much wished for by my friends, (to wit, his condign punishment,) would not have been obtained, when it came to be seen that I had consented to give him a clandestine meeting; and, in consequence of that, had been weakly tricked out of myself; and further still, had not been able to avoid living under one roof with him for several weeks; which I did, (not only without complaint, but) without *cause* of complaint?

Little advantage *in a court*, (perhaps, bandied about, and jested profligately with,) would some of those pleas in my favour have been, which *out of court*, and to a *private* and *serious* audience, would have carried the greatest weight against him—Such, particularly, as the infamous methods to which he had recourse—

It would, no doubt, have been a ready retort from *every* mouth, that I ought not to have thrown myself into the power of such a man, and that I ought to take for my pains what had befallen me.

But had the prosecution been carried on to *effect*, and had he even been *sentenced to death*, can it be supposed that his family would not have had interest enough to obtain his pardon, for a crime thought too lightly of,

though one of the greatest that can be committed against a creature valuing her honour above her life?—While I had been censured as pursuing with sanguinary views a man who offered me early all the reparation in his power to make?

And had he been *pardoned*, would he not then have been at liberty to do as much mischief as ever?

I dare say, Sir, such is the assurance of the man upon whom my unhappy destiny threw me; and such his inveteracy to my family, (which would then have appeared to be justified by their known inveteracy to *him*, and by their earnest endeavours to take away his life;) that he would not have been sorry to have had an opportunity to confront me, and my father, uncles, and brother, at the bar of a court of justice, on such an occasion. In which case, would not (on his acquittal, or pardon) resentments have been reciprocally heightened? And then would my brother, or my cousin Morden, have been more secure than now?

How do these conditions aggravate my fault! My motives, at first, were not indeed blamable: but I had forgotten the excellent caution, which yet I was not ignorant of, *That we ought not to do evil that good may come of it.*

In full conviction of the purity of my heart, and of the firmness of my principles, [Why may I not, thus called upon, say what I am conscious of, and yet without the imputation of faulty pride; since all is but a *duty*, and I should be utterly inexcusable, could I not justly say what I do?—In this full conviction,] he has offered me marriage. He has avowed his penitence: a *sincere* penitence I have reason to think it, though perhaps not a *christian* one. And his noble relations, (kinder to the poor sufferer than

her own,) on the same conviction, and his own not ungenerous acknowledgments, have joined to intercede with me to *forgive* and *accept* of him. Although I cannot comply with the latter part of their intercession, have not you, Sir, from the *best* rules, and from the *divinest* example, taught me to forgive injuries?

The injury I have received from him is indeed of the hightest nature, and it was attended with circumstances of unmanly baseness and premeditation; yet, I bless God, it has not tainted my mind; it has not hurt my morals. No thanks indeed to the wicked man that it has not. No vile courses have followed it. My will is unviolated. The evil, (respecting *myself*, and not my *friends*,) is merely personal. No credulity, no weakness, no want of vigilance, have I to reproach myself with. I have, through grace, triumphed over the deepest machinations. I have escaped from him. I have renounced him. The man whom once I could have loved, I have been enabled to despise: And shall not *charity* complete my triumph? and shall I not *enjoy* it?—And where would be my triumph if he *deserved* my forgiveness?—Poor man! he has had a loss in losing me! I have the pride to think so, because I think I know my own heart. I have had none in losing him.

But I have *another* plea to make, which alone would have been enough (as I presume) to answer the contents of your very kind and friendly letter.

I know, my dear and reverend friend, the spiritual guide and director of my happier days! I know, that you will allow of my endeavour to bring myself to this charitable disposition, when I tell you how near I think myself to that great and awful moment, *in* which, and even in the ardent preparation *to* which, every sense of indignity

or injury that concerns not the immortal soul, ought to be absorbed in higher and more important contemplations.

Thus much for *myself*.

And for the satisfaction of my *friends* and *favourers*, Miss Howe is solicitous to have all those letters and materials preserved, which will set my whole story in a true light. The good Dr. Lewen is one of the principal of those friends and favourers.

The warning that may be given from those papers to all such young creatures as may have known or heard of me, may be of more efficacy to the end wished for, as I humbly presume to think, than my appearance could have been in a court of justice, pursuing a doubtful event, under the disadvantages I have mentioned. And if, my dear and good Sir, you are now, on considering every thing, of *this* opinion, and I could *know* it, I should consider it as a particular felicity; being as solicitous as ever to be justified in what I may in your eyes.

I am sorry, Sir, that your indisposition has reduced you to the necessity of writing upon your pillow. But how much am I obliged to that kind and generous concern for me, which has *impelled* you, as I may say, to write a letter, containing so many paternal lines, with such inconvenience to yourself!

May the Almighty bless you, dear and reverend Sir, for all your goodness to me of long time past, as well as for that which engages my present gratitude! Continue to esteem me to the last, as I do and will venerate you! And let me bespeak your prayers, the *continuance*, I should say, of your prayers; for I doubt not, that I have always had them: and to them, perhaps, has in part been owing (as well as to your pious precepts instilled through my earlier youth) that I have been able to make the stand

I have made; although every thing that you prayed for has not been granted to me by that Divine Wisdom, which knows what is best for its poor creatures.

My prayers for *you* are, that it will please God to restore you to your affectionate flock; and after as many years of life as shall be for *his* service, and to *your own* comfort, give us a happy meeting in those regions of blessedness, which you have taught me, as well by *example*, as by *precept*, to aspire to!

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXVIII.

MISS ARAB. HARLOWE, TO MISS CL. HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's to her Uncle Antony of Aug.* 13*.]

SISTER CLARY, Monday, Aug. 21.

I FIND by your letters to my uncles, that they, as well as I, are in great disgrace with you for writing our minds to you.

We can't help it, sister Clary.

You don't think it worth your while, I find, a second time to press for the blessing you pretend to be so earnest about. You think, no doubt, that you have done your duty in asking for it: so you'll sit down satisfied with that, I suppose, and leave it to your wounded parents to repent hereafter that they have not done *theirs*, in giving it to you, at the *first* word; and in making such in-

* See Letter XLVI. of this volume.

quiries about you, as you think ought to have been made. Fine encouragement to inquire after a run-away daughter! living with her fellow as long as he would live with her! You repent also (with your *full mind*, as you modestly call it) that you wrote to me.

So we are not likely to be applied to any more, I find, in this way.

Well then, since this is the case, sister Clary, let me, *with all humility*, address myself with a proposal or two to you; to which you will be *graciously* pleased to give an answer.

Now you must know, that we have had hints given us, from several quarters, that you have been used in such a manner by the villain you ran away with, that his life would be answerable for his crime, if it were fairly to be proved. And, by your own hints, something like it appears to us.

If, Clary, there be any thing but jingle and affected period in what proceeds from your *full mind*, and your *dutiful consciousness;* and if there be truth in what Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Howe have acquainted us with; you may yet justify your character to us, and to the world, in every thing but your scandalous elopement; and the law may reach the villain: and, could we but bring him to the gallows, what a meritorious revenge would that be to our whole injured family, and to the innocents he has deluded, as well as the saving from ruin many others!

Let me, therefore, know *(if you please)* whether you are willing to appear to do *yourself*, and *us*, and your *sex*, this justice? If *not*, sister Clary, we shall know what to think of you; for neither *you* nor *we* can suffer more than we have done from the scandal of your fall: and, if, *you will*, Mr. Ackland and counsellor Derham will

both attend you to make *proper inquiries*, and to take minutes of your story, to found a process upon, if it will bear one with as great a probability of success as we are told it may be prosecuted with.

But, by what Mrs. Howe intimates, this is not likely to be complied with; for it is what she hinted to you, it seems, by her lively daughter, but without effect*; and then, again, possibly, you may not at present behave so prudently in some certain points, as to entitle yourself to public justice; which, if true, the Lord have mercy upon you!

One word only more as to the above proposal:—Your admirer, Dr. Lewen, is clear, in his opinion, that you should prosecute the villain.

But if you will not agree to this, I have another proposal to make to you, and that in the name of every one in the family; which is, that you will think of going to Pensylvania to reside there for some few years till all is blown over: and, if it please God to spare you, and your unhappy parents, till they can be satisfied that you behave like a true and uniform penitent; at least till you are one-and-twenty; you may then come back to your own estate, or have the produce of it sent you thither, as you shall choose. A period which my father fixes, because it is the *custom;* and because he thinks your *grandfather* should have fixed it; and because, let *me* add, you have fully proved by your fine conduct, that you were not at years of discretion at *eighteen*. Poor doting, though good old man!—Your grandfather, he thought—But I would not be too severe.

Mr. Hartley has a widow-sister at Pensylvania, with

* See Letter XLIX. of Vol. VI.

whom he will undertake you may board, and who is a sober, sensible, well-read woman. And if you were once well there, it would rid your father and mother of a world of cares, and fears, and scandal; and I think is what you should wish for of all things.

Mr. Hartley will engage for all accommodations in your passage suitable to your rank and fortune; and he has a concern in a ship, which will sail in a month; and you may take your secret-keeping Hannah with you, or whom you will of your *newer* acquaintance. 'Tis presumed that your companions will be of your own sex.

These are what I had to communicate to you; and if you'll oblige me with an answer, (which the hand that conveys this will call for on Wednesday morning,) it will be very condescending.

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXIX.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO MISS ARAB. HARLOWE.

Tuesday, Aug. 22.

WRITE to me, my hard-hearted Sister, in what manner you please, I shall always be thankful to you for your notice. But (think what you will of me) I cannot see Mr. Ackland and the counsellor on such a business as you mention.

The Lord have mercy upon me indeed! for none else will.

Surely I am believed to be a creature past all shame, or it could not be thought of sending two *gentlemen* to me on such an errand.

Had my *mother* required of me (or would *modesty* have permitted *you* to inquire into) the particulars of my sad story, or had *Mrs. Norton* been directed to receive them from me, methinks it had been more fit: and I presume to think that it would have been more in every one's character too, had they been required of me before such heavy judgment had been passed upon me as has been passed.

I *know* that this is Dr. Lewen's opinion. He has been so good as to enforce it in a kind letter to me. I have answered his letter; and given such reasons as I hope will satisfy *him*. I could wish it were thought worth while to request of him a sight of my answer.*

To your other proposal, of going to Pensylvania; this is my answer—If nothing happen within a month which may full as effectually rid my parents and friends of that world of cares, and fears, and scandals, which you mention, and if I am *then* able to be carried on board of ship, I will cheerfully obey my father and mother, although I were sure to die in the passage. And, if I may be forgiven for saying so (for indeed it proceeds not from a spirit of reprisal) you shall set over me, instead of my poor obliging, but really-unculpable, Hannah, your Betty Barnes; to whom I will be answerable for all my conduct. And I will make it worth her while to accompany me.

I am equally surprised and concerned at the hints which

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* Her letter, containing the reasons she refers to, was not asked for; and Dr. Lewen's death, which fell out soon after he had received it, was the reason that it was no ommunicated to the family, till it was too late to do the service that might have been hoped for from it.

both you and my uncle Antony give of *new* points of misbehaviour in me!—What can be meant by them?

I will not tell you, Miss Harlowe, how much I am afflicted at your severity, and how much I suffer by it, and by your hard-hearted levity of style, because what I shall say may be construed into *jingle* and *period*, and because I know it is *intended*, very possibly for *kind* ends, to mortify me. All I will therefore say is, that it does not lose its end, if that be it.

But, nevertheless, (divesting myself as much as possible of all resentment,) I will only pray that Heaven will give you, for *your own* sake, a kinder heart than at present you seem to have; since a kind heart, I am convinced, is a greater blessing to its possessor than it can be to any other person. Under this conviction I subscribe myself, my dear Bella,

Your ever-affectionate sister,

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXX.

MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In answer to her's of Thursday, Aug.* 17.*]

MY DEAREST YOUNG LADY, Tuesday, Aug. 22.

THE letters you sent me I now return by the hand that brings you this.

* See Letter XLVIII. of this volume.

It is impossible for me to express how much I have been affected by them, and by your last of the 17th. Indeed, my dear Miss Clary, you are very harshly used; indeed you are! And if you should be taken from us, what grief and what punishmemt are they not treasuring up against themselves in the heavy reflections which their rash censures and unforgivingness will occasion them!

But I find to what your uncle Antony's cruel letter is owing, as well as one you will be still more afflicted by, [God help you, my poor dear child!] when it comes to your hand, written by your sister, with proposals to you*.

It was finished to send you yesterday, I know; and I apprize you of it, that you should fortify your heart against the contents of it.

The motives which incline them all to this severity, if well grounded, would authorize any severity they could express, and which, while they believe them to be so, both they and you are to be equally pitied.

They are owing to the information of that officious Mr. Brand, who has acquainted them (from some enemy of your's in the neighbourhood about you) that visits are made you, highly censurable, by a man of a free character, and an intimate of Mr. Lovelace; who is often in private with you; sometimes twice or thrice a day.

Betty gives herself great liberties of speech upon this occasion, and all your friends are too ready to believe that things are not as they should be; which makes me wish that, let the gentleman's views be ever so honourable, you could entirely drop acquaintance with him.

Something of this nature was hinted at by Betty to me before, but so darkly that I could not tell what to make

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* See Letter LXVIII. of this volume.

of it; and this made me mention to you so *generally* as I did in my last.

Your cousin Morden has been among them. He is exceedingly concerned for your misfortunes; and as they will not believe Mr. Lovelace would marry you, he is determined to go to Lord M's, in order to inform himself from Mr. Lovelace's own mouth, whether he intends to do you that justice or not.

He was extremely caressed by every one at his first arrival; but I am told there is some little coldness between them and him at present.

I was in hopes of getting a sight of this letter of Mr. Brand: (a rash officious man!) but it seems Mr. Morden had it given him yesterday to read, and he took it away with him.

God be your comfort, my dear Miss! But indeed I am exceedingly disturbed at the thoughts of what may still be the issue of all these things. I am, my beloved young lady,

Your most affectionate and faithful

JUDITH NORTON.

LETTER LXXI.

MRS. NORTON, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Tuesday, Aug. 22.

AFTER I had sealed up the enclosed, I had the honour of a private visit from your aunt Hervey; who has been in a very low-spirited way, and kept her chamber for several weeks past; and is but just got abroad.

She longed, she said, to see me, and to weep with me, on the hard fate that had befallen her beloved niece.

I will give you a faithful account of what passed between us; as I expect that it will, upon the whole, administer hope and comfort to you.

'She pitied very much your good mother, who, she 'assured me, is obliged to act a part entirely contrary to 'her inclinations; as she herself, she owns, had been in 'a great measure.

'She said, that the poor lady was with great difficulty 'with-held from answering your letter to her; which had '(as was your aunt's expression) almost broken the heart 'of every one: that she had reason to think that she was 'neither consenting to your two uncles writing, nor ap-'proving of what they wrote.

'She is sure they all love you dearly; but have gone 'so far, that they know not how to recede.

'That, but for the *abominable league* which your 'brother had got every body into (he refusing to set out 'for Scotland till it was renewed, and till they had all 'promised to take no step towards a reconciliation in his 'absence but by his consent; and to which your sister's 'resentments kept them up); all would before now have 'happily subsided.

'That nobody knew the pangs which their inflexible 'behaviour gave them, ever since you had begun to write 'to them in so affecting and humble a style.

'That, however, they were not inclined to believe 'that you were either so ill, or so penitent as you really 'are; and still less, that Mr. Lovelace is in earnest in his 'offers of marriage.

'She is sure, however, she says, that all will soon be 'well: and the sooner for Mr. Morden's arrival: who 'is very zealous in your behalf.

'She wished to Heaven that you would accept of Mr 'Lovelace, wicked as he has been, if he were now in 'earnest.

'It had always,' she said, 'been matter of astonishment 'to her, that so weak a pride in her cousin James, of 'making himself the *whole family*, should induce them 'all to refuse an alliance with such a family as Mr. 'Lovelace's was.

'She would have it, that your going off with Mr. 'Lovelace was the unhappiest step for your honour and 'your interest that could have been taken; for that al- 'though you would have had a severe trial the next day, 'yet it would probably have been the *last;* and your 'pathetic powers must have drawn you off some friends— 'hinting at your mother, at your uncle Harlowe, at your 'uncle Hervey, and herself.'

But here (that the regret that you did not trust to the event of that meeting, may not, in your present low way, too much affiict you) I must observe, that it seems a little too evident, even from this opinion of your aunt's, that it was not absolutely determined that all compulsion was designed to be avoided, since your freedom from it must have been owing to the party to be made among them by your persuasive eloquence and dutiful expostulation.

'She owned, that some of them were as much afraid of 'meeting you as you could be of meeting them:'—But why so, if they designed, in the last instance, to give you your way?

Your aunt told me, 'That Mrs. Williams* had been 'with her, and asked her opinion, if it would be taken 'amiss, if she desired leave to go up, to attend her 'dearest young lady in her calamity. Your aunt re- 'ferred her to your mother: but had heard no more of it.

'Her daughter,' (Miss Dolly,) she said, 'had been fre- 'quently earnest with her on the same subject; and re- 'newed her request with the greatest fervour when your 'first letter came to hand.'

Your aunt says, 'That she then being very ill, wrote 'to your mother upon it, hoping it would not be taken 'amiss if she permitted Miss Dolly to go; but that your 'sister, as from your mother, answered her, That now 'you seemed to be coming-to, and to have a due sense 'of your faults, you must be left entirely to their own 'management.

'Miss Dolly,' she said, 'had pined ever since she had 'heard of Mr. Lovelace's baseness; being doubly mor- 'tified by it: first, on account of your sufferings; next, 'because she was one who rejoiced in your getting off, 'and vindicated you for it; and had incurred censure and 'ill-will on that account; especially from your brother 'and sister; so that she seldom went to Harlowe-place.'

Make the best use of these intelligences, my dearest young lady, for your consolation.

I will only add, that I am, with the most fervent prayers for your recovery and restoration to favour,

Your ever-faithful

JUDITH NORTON.

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* The former housekeeper at Harlowe-place.

LETTER LXXII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO MRS. JUDITH NORTON.

Thursday, Aug. 24.

THE relation of such a conversation as passed between my aunt and you would have given me pleasure, had it come some time ago; because it would have met with a spirit more industrious than mine *now* is, to pick out remote comfort in the hope of a favourable turn that might one day have rewarded my patient duty.

I did not doubt my aunt's good-will to me. Her affection I did not doubt. But shall we wonder that kings and princes meet with so little controul in their passions, be they ever so violent, when, in a private family, an aunt, nay, even a mother in that family, shall choose to give up a once-favoured child against their own inclinations, rather than oppose an aspiring young man, who had armed himself with the authority of a father, who, when once determined, never would be expostulated with?

And will you not *blame* me, if I say, that good sense, that kindred indulgence, must be a little offended at the treatment I have met with; and if I own, that I think that great rigour has been exercised towards me! And yet I am now authorized to call it *rigour* by the judgment of two excellent sisters, my mother and my aunt, who acknowledge (as you tell me from my aunt) that they have been obliged to join against me, contrary to their inclinations; and that even in a point which might seem to concern my eternal welfare.

But I must not go on at this rate. For may not the inclination my mother has given up be the effect of a too-

fond indulgence, rather than that I merit the indulgence? And yet so petulantly perverse am I, that I must tear myself from the subject.

All then that I will say further to it, at this time, is, that were the intended goodness to be granted to me but a week hence, it would possibly be too late—too late I mean to be of the consolation to me that I would wish from it: for what an inefficacious preparation must I have been making, if it has not, by this time, carried me above—But above what?—Poor mistaken creature! Unhappy self-deluder! that finds herself above nothing! Nor able to subdue her own faulty impatience!

But in *deed*, to have done with a subject that I dare not trust myself with, if it come in your way, let my aunt Hervey, let my dear cousin Dolly, let the worthy Mrs. Williams, know how exceedingly grateful to me their kind intentions and concern for me are: and, as the best warrant or justification of their good opinions, (since I know that their favour for me is founded on the belief that I loved virtue,) tell them, that I *continued* to love virtue to my last hour, as I presume to hope it may be said; and assure them that I never made the least *wilful* deviation, however unhappy I became for one faulty step; which nevertheless was not owing to unworthy or perverse motives.

I am very sorry that my cousin Morden has taken a resolution to see Mr. Lovelace.

My apprehensions on this intelligence are a great abatement to the pleasure I have in knowing that he still loves me.

My sister's letter to me is a most afflicting one—so *needlessly*, so *ludicrously* taunting!—But for that part

of it that is so, I ought rather to pity her, than to be so much concerned at it as I am.

I wonder what I have done to Mr. Brand—I pray God to forgive both him and his informants, whoever they be. But if the scandal arise solely from Mr. Belford's visits, a very little time will confute it. Mean while, the packet I shall send you, which I sent to Miss Howe, will, I hope, satisfy *you*, my dear Mrs. Norton, as to my reasons for admitting his visits.

My sister's taunting letter, and the inflexibleness of my dearer friends—But how do remoter-begun subjects tend to the point which lies nearest the heart!—As new-caught bodily disorders all crowd to a fractured or distempered part.

I will break off, with requesting your prayers that I may be blessed with patience and due resignation; and with assuring you, that I am, and will be to the last hour of my life,

Your equally grateful and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXIII.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

[*In reply to her's of Friday, Aug.* 11*.]

MY DEAREST FRIEND, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, Aug. 23.

I HAVE read the letters and copies of letters you favoured me with: and I return them by a particular hand.

* See Letter XLIV. of this volume.

I am extremely concerned at your indifferent state of health: but I approve of all your proceedings and precautions in relation to the appointment of Mr. Belford for an office, in which, I hope, neither he nor any body else will be wanted to act, for many, very many years.

I admire, and so we do all, that greatness of mind which can make you so stedfastly despise (through such inducements as no other woman could resist, and in such desolate circumstances as you have been reduced to) the wretch that ought to be so heartily despised and detested.

What must the contents of those letters from your relations be, which you will not communicate to me!—Fie upon them! How my heart rises!—But I dare say no more—though you yourself now begin to think they use you with great severity.

Every body here is so taken with Mr. Hickman (and the more from the horror they conceive at the character of the detestable Lovelace, that I have been teased to death almost to name a day. This has given him airs: and, did I not keep him to it, he would behave as carelessly and as insolently as if he were sure of me. I have been forced to mortify him no less than four times since we have been here.

I made him lately undergo a severe penance for some negligences that were not to be passed over. Not *designed* ones, he said: but that was a poor excuse, as I told him: for, had they been *designed*, he should never have come into my presence more: that they were *not*, showed his want of thought and attention; and those were inexcusable in a man only in his probatory state.

He hoped he had been more than in a *probatory* state, he said.

And therefore, Sir, might be more *careless!*—So you

add *ingratitude* to *negligence*, and make what you plead as *accident*, that *itself* wants an excuse, *design*, which deserves none.

I would not see him for two days, and he was so penitent, and so humble, that I had like to have lost myself, to make him amends: for, as you have said, a resentment carried too high, often ends in amends too humble.

I long to be nearer to you: but that must not yet be, it seems. Pray, my dear, let me hear from you as often as you can.

May Heaven increase your comforts, and restore your health, are the prayers of

Your ever faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

P. S. Excuse me that I did not write before: it was owing to a little coasting voyage I was obliged to give into.

LETTER LXXIV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

Friday, Aug. 25.

You are very obliging, my dear Miss Howe, to account to me for your silence. I was easy in it, as I doubted not that, among such near and dear friends as you are with, you was diverted from writing by some such agreeable excursion as that you mention.

I was in hopes that you had given over, at this time of day, those very sprightly airs, which I have taken the li-

berty to blame you for, as often as you have given me occasion to so do; and that has been *very* often.

I was always very grave with you upon this subject: and while your own and a worthy man's future happiness are in the question, I must enter into it, whenever you forget yourself, although I had not a day to live: and indeed I am very ill.

I am sure it was not your intention to take your future husband with you to the little island to make him look weak and silly among those of your relations who never before had seen him. Yet do you think it possible for them (however prepared and resolved they may be to like him) to forbear smiling at him, when they see him suffering under your whimsical penances? A modest man should no more be made little in *his own eyes*, than in the eyes of *others*. If he be, he will have a diffidence, which will give an awkwardness to every thing he says or does; and this will be no more to the credit of your choice than to that of the approbation he meets with from your friends, or to his own credit.

I love an obliging, and even an *humble*, deportment in a man to the woman he addresses. It is a mark of his politeness, and tends to give her that opinion of herself, which it may be supposed bashful merit wants to be inspired with. But if the woman exacts it with an high hand, she shows not either her own politeness or gratitude; although I must confess she does her courage. I gave you expectations that I would be very serious with you.

O my dear, that it had been my lot (as I was not permitted to live single,) to have met with a man by whom I could have acted generously and unreservedly!

Mr. Lovelace, it is now plain, in order to have a pretence against me, taxed my behaviour to him with stiffness and distance. You, at one time, thought me guilty of some degree of prudery. Difficult situations should be allowed for: which often make seeming occasions for censure unavoidable. I deserved not blame from *him* who made mine difficult. And you, my dear, had I had any other man to deal with, or had he had but half the merit which Mr. Hickman has, would have found that my doctrine on this subject should have governed my practice.

But to put myself out of the question—I'll tell you what I should think, were I an indifferent by-stander, of those high airs of your's, in return for Mr. Hickman's humble demeanour. 'The lady thinks of having the gen-'tleman, I see plainly, would I say. But I see *as* plain-'ly, that she has a very great indifference to him. And 'to what may this indifference be owing? To one or all 'of these considerations, no doubt: that she receives his 'addresses rather from motives of convenience than 'choice: that she thinks meanly of *his* endowments and 'intellects; at least more highly of *her own:* or, she has 'not the generosity to use that power with moderation, 'which his great affection for her puts into her hands.'

How would you like, my dear, to have any of these things said?

Then to give but the shadow of a reason for free-livers and free speakers to say, or to imagine, that Miss Howe gives her hand to a man who has no reason to expect any share in her heart, I am sure you would not wish that such a thing should be so much as supposed. Then all the regard from you to come *afterwards;* none to be shown

before; must, I should think, be capable of being construed as a compliment to the *husband*, made at the expense of the *wife's* and even of the sex's *delicacy!*

There is no fear that attempts could be formed by the most audacious [two Lovelaces there cannot be!] upon a character so revered for virtue, and so charmingly spirited, as Miss Howe's: yet, to have any man encouraged to despise a husband by the example of one who is most concerned to do him honour; what, my dear, think you of that? It is but too natural for envious men (and who that knows Miss Howe, will not envy Mr. Hickman!) to scoff at, and to jest upon, those who are treated with or will bear indignity from a woman.

If a man so treated have a true and ardent love for the woman he addresses, he will be easily overawed by her displeasure: and this will put him upon acts of submission, which will be called *meanness.* And what woman of true spirit would like to have it said, that she would impose any thing upon the man from whom she one day expects protection and defence, that should be capable of being construed as a meanness, or unmanly abjectness in his behaviour, even to herself?—Nay, I am not sure, and I ask it of you, my dear, to resolve me, whether, in your own opinion, it is not likely, that a woman of spirit will *despise* rather than *value* more, the man who will take patiently an insult at her hands; especially *before company.*

I have always observed, that prejudices in *disfavour* of a person at his first appearance, fix deeper, and are much more difficult to be removed *when* fixed, than prejudices in *favour:* whether owing to envy, or to that malignant principle so eminently visible in little minds, which makes them wish to bring down the more worthy charac-

ters to their own low level, I pretend not to determine When once, therefore, a woman of your good sense gives room to the world to think she has not an high opinion of the *lover*, whom nevertheless she *entertains*, it will be very difficult for her afterwards to make that world think so well as she would have it of the *husband* she has chosen.

Give me leave to observe, that to condescend with *dignity*, and to command with such *kindness*, and *sweetness of manners*, as should let the condescension, while in a single state, be seen and acknowledged, are points, which a wise woman, *knowing her man*, should aim at: and a wise woman, I should think, would choose to live single all her life rather than give herself to a man whom she thinks unworthy of a treatment so noble.

But when a woman lets her lover see that she has the generosity to approve of and reward a well-meant service; that she has a mind that lifts her above the little captious follies, which some (too licentiously, I hope,) attribute to the sex in general: that she resents not (if ever she thinks she has reason to be displeased) with petulance, or through pride: nor thinks it necessary to insist upon little points, to come at or secure great ones, perhaps not proper to be aimed at: nor leaves room to suppose she has so much cause to doubt her own merit, as to put the love of the man she intends to favour upon disagreeable or arrogant trials: but let reason be the principal guide of her actions —she will then never fail of that true respect, of that sincere veneration, which she wishes to meet with; and which will make her judgment after marriage consulted, sometimes with a *preference* to a man's own; at other times as a delightful *confirmation* of his.

And so much, my beloved Miss Howe, for this subject *now*, and I dare say, *for ever!*

I will begin another letter by-and-by, and send both together. Mean time, I am, &c.

LETTER LXXV.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

[In this letter the Lady acquaints Miss Howe with Mr. Brand's report; with her sister's proposals either that she will go abroad, or prosecute Mr. Lovelace. She complains of the severe letters of her uncle Antony and her sister; but in milder terms than they deserved.

She sends her Dr. Lewen's letter, and the copy of her answer to it.

She tells her of the difficulties she had been under to avoid seeing Mr. Lovelace. She gives her the contents of the letter she wrote to him to divert him from his proposed visit: she is afraid, she says, that it is a step that is not strictly right, if allegory or metaphor be not allowable to one in her circumstances.

She informs her of her cousin Morden's arrival and readiness to take her part with her relations; of his designed interview with Mr. Lovelace; and tells her what her apprehensions are upon it.

She gives her the purport of the conversation between her aunt Hervey and Mrs. Norton. And then adds:]

But were they ever so favourably inclined to me now, what can they do for me? I wish, and that for their sakes more than for my own, that they would yet relent—but I am very ill—I must drop my pen—a sudden faintness

overspreads my heart—excuse my crooked writing!—Adieu, my dear!—Adieu!

Three o'clock, Friday.

Once more I resume my pen. I thought I had taken my last farewell of you. I never was so very oddly affected: something that seemed totally to overwhelm my faculties—I don't know how to describe it—I believe I do amiss in writing so much, and taking too much upon me: but an active mind, though clouded by bodily illness, cannot be idle.

I'll see if the air, and a discontinued attention, will help me. But, if it will not, don't be concerned for me, my dear. I shall be happy. Nay, I am more so already than of late I thought I could ever be in this life.—Yet how this *body* clings!—How it encumbers!

Seven o'clock.

I could not send this letter away with so melancholy an ending, as *you* would have thought it. So I deferred closing it, till I saw how I should be on my return from my airing: and now I must say I am quite another thing: so alert! that I could proceed with as much spirit as I began, and add more preachment to your lively subject, if I had not written more than enough upon it already.

I wish you would let me give you and Mr. Hickman joy. Do, my dear. I should take some to *myself*, if you would.

My respectful compliments to all your friends, as well to those I have the honour to know, as to those I do not know.

I have just now been surprised with a letter from one

whom I long ago gave up all thoughts of hearing from. From Mr. Wyerley. I will enclose it. You'll be surprised at it as much as I was. This seems to be a man whom I *might* have reclaimed. But I could not love him. Yet I hope I never treated him with arrogance. Indeed, my dear, if I am not too partial to myself, I think I refused him with more gentleness, than you retain somebody else. And this recollection gives me less pain than I should have had in the other case, on receiving this instance of a generosity that affects me. I will also enclose the rough draught of my answer, as soon as I have transcribed it.

If I begin another sheet, I shall write to the end of it: wherefore I will only add my prayers for your honour and prosperity, and for a long, long, happy life; and that, when it comes to be wound up, you may be as calm and as easy at quitting it as I hope in God I shall be. I am, and will be, to the latest moment,

Your truly affectionate and obliged servant,

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXVI.

MR. WYERLEY, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

DEAREST MADAM, Wednesday, Aug. 23.

You will be surprised to find renewed, at this distance of time, an address so positively though so politely discouraged: but, however it be received, I *must* renew it. Every body has heard that you have been vilely treated by a man who, to treat *you* ill, must be the vilest of men.

Every body knows your just resentment of his base treatment: that you are determined never to be reconciled to him: and that you persist in these sentiments against all the entreaties of his noble relations, against all the prayers and repentance of his ignoble self. And all the world that have the honour to know *you*, or have heard of *him*, applaud your resolution, as worthy of yourself; worthy of your virtue, and of that strict honour which was always attributed to you by every one who spoke of you.

But, Madam, were all the world to have been of a different opinion, it could never have altered mine. I ever loved you; I ever *must* love you. Yet have I endeavoured to resign to my hard fate. When I had so many ways, in vain, sought to move you in my favour, I sat down seemingly contented. I even wrote to you that I *would* sit down contented. And I endeavoured to make all my friends and companions think I was. But nobody knows what pangs this self-denial cost me! In vain did the chace, in vain did travel, in vain did lively company, offer themselves, and were embraced in their turn: with redoubled force did my passion for you renew my unhappiness, when I looked into myself, into my own heart; for there did your charming image sit enthroned; and you engrossed me all.

I truly deplore those misfortunes, and those sufferings, for your *own* sake; which nevertheless encourage *me* to renew my old hope. I know not particulars. I dare not inquire after them; because *my* sufferings would be increased with the knowledge of what *your's* have been. I therefore desire not to know more than what common report wounds my ears with; and what is given me to know, by your absence from your cruel family, and from the sacred place, where I, among numbers of your re-

jected admirers, used to be twice a week sure to behold you doing credit to that service of which your example gave me the highest notions. But whatever be those misfortunes, of whatsoever nature those sufferings, I shall bless the occasion for *my own* sake (though for *your's* curse the author of them,) if they may give me the happiness to know that this my renewed address may not be absolutely rejected.—Only give me hope, that it may one day meet with encouragement, if in the interim nothing happen, either in my morals or behaviour, to give you fresh offence. Give me but hope of this—not absolutely to *reject* me is all the hope I ask for; and I will love you, if possible, still more than I ever loved you—and that for your sufferings; for well you deserve to be loved, even to adoration, who can, for honour's and for virtue's sake, subdue a passion which common spirits [I speak by cruel experience] find invincible; and this at a time when the black offender kneels and supplicates, as I am well assured he does, (all his friends likewise supplicating for him,) to be forgiven.

That you cannot forgive him, not forgive him so as to receive him again to favour, is no wonder. His offence is against virtue: this is a part of your essence. What magnanimity is this! How just to yourself, and to your spotless character! Is it any merit to admire more than ever a lady who can so exaltedly distinguish? It is not. I cannot plead it.

What hope have I left, may it be said, when my address was *before* rejected, now, that your sufferings, so *nobly borne*, have, with all *good judges*, exalted your character? Yet, Madam, I have to pride myself in this, that while your friends (not looking upon you in the just light I do) persecute and banish you; while your estate is

withheld from you, and threatened (as I *know*,) to *be* withheld, as long as the chicaning law, or rather the chicaneries of its practisers, can keep it from you: while you are destitute of protection; every body standing aloof, either through fear of the injurer of one family, or of the hard-hearted of the other; I pride myself, I say, to stand forth, and offer my fortune, and my life, at your devotion. With a *selfish* hope indeed: I should be too great an hypocrite not to own this! and I know how much you abhor insincerity.

But, whether you encourage that hope or not, accept my best services, I beseech you, Madam: and be pleased to excuse me for a piece of honest art, which the nature of the case (doubting the honour of your notice otherwise) makes me choose to conclude with—it is this:

If I am to be still the most unhappy of men, let your pen by *one line* tell me so. If I am permitted to indulge a hope, however distant, your *silence* shall be deemed, by me, the happiest indication of it that you can give—except that *still* happier—(the happiest that *can* befall me,) a signification that you will accept the tender of that life and fortune, which it would be my pride and my glory to sacrifice in your service, leaving the reward to *yourself*.

Be your determination as it may, I must for ever admire and love you. Nor will I ever change my condition, while you live, whether you change your's or not: for, having once had the presumption to address *you*, I cannot stoop to think of any other woman: and this I solemnly declare in the presence of that God, whom I daily pray to bless and protect you, be your determination what it will with regard to, dearest Madam,

Your most devoted and ever affectionate
and faithful servant,
ALEXANDER WYERLEY.

LETTER LXXVII.

MISS CL. HARLOWE, TO ALEX. WYERLEY, ESQ.

SIR, Sat. Aug. 26.

THE generosity of your purpose would have commanded not only my notice, but my thanks, although you had *not* given me the alternative you are pleased to call *artful*. And I do therefore give you my thanks for your kind letter.

At the time you distinguished me by your favourable opinion, I told you, Sir, that my choice was the single life. And most *truly* did I tell you so.

When that was not permitted me, and I looked round upon the several gentlemen who had been proposed to me, and had reason to believe that there was not one of them against whose morals or principles there lay not *some* exception, it would not have been *much* to be wondered at, if FANCY *had* been allowed to give a preference, where JUDGMENT was at a loss to determine.

Far be it from me to say this with a design to upbraid you, Sir, or to reflect upon you. I always wished you well. You had reason to think I did. You had the generosity to be pleased with the frankness of my behaviour to you; as I had with that of your's to me; and I am sorry, very sorry, to be now told, that the acquiescence you obliged me with gave you so much pain.

Had the option I have mentioned been allowed me *afterwards*, (as I not only wished, but proposed,) things had not happened that did happen. But there was a kind of fatality by which our whole family was impelled, as I

may say; and which none of us were permitted to avoid. But this is a subject that cannot be dwelt upon.

As matters are, I have only to wish, for your own sake, that you will encourage and cultivate those good motions in your mind, to which many passages in your kind and generous letter now before me must be owing. Depend upon it, Sir, that such motions, wrought into habit, will yield you pleasure at a *time* when nothing else can; and at *present*, shining out in your actions and conversation, will commend you to the worthiest of our sex. For, Sir, the man who is good upon *choice*, as well as by *education*, has that quality in himself, which ennobles the human race, and without which the most dignified by birth or rank are ignoble.

As to the resolution you solemnly make not to marry while I live, I should be concerned at it, were I not morally sure that you may keep it, and yet not be detrimented by it: since a few, a very few days, will convince you, that I am got above all human dependence; and that there is no need of that protection and favour, which you so generously offer to, Sir,

Your obliged well-wisher, and humble servant,

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Monday Noon, Aug. 28.

ABOUT the time of poor Belton's interment last night, as near as we could guess, Lord M., Mowbray, and myself,

toasted once, *To the memory of honest Tom. Belton*; and, by a quick transition to the living, *Health to Miss Harlowe;* which Lord M. obligingly began, and, *To the happy reconciliation;* and then we stuck in a remembrance *To honest Jack Belford*, who, of late, we all agreed, is become an useful and humane man; and one who prefers his friend's service to his own.

But what is the meaning I hear nothing from thee*? And why dost thou not let me into the grounds of the sudden reconciliation between my beloved and her friends, and the cause of the generous invitation which she gives me of attending her at her father's some time hence?

Thou must certainly have been let into the secret by this time; and I can tell thee, I shall be plaguy jealous if there be any one thing pass between my angel and thee that is to be concealed from me. For either I am a principal in this cause, or I am nothing.

I have dispatched Will. to know the reason of thy neglect.

But let me whisper a word or two in thy ear. I begin to be afraid, after all, that this letter was a stratagem to get me out of town, and for nothing else: for, in the first place, Tourville, in a letter I received this morning, tells me, that the lady is actually very ill! [I am sorry for it with all my soul!]. This, thou'lt say, I may think a reason why she cannot *set out as yet:* but then I have heard, on the other hand, but last night, that the family is as implacable as ever; and my Lord and I expect this very afternoon a visit from Colonel Morden; who, undertakes, it seems, to question me as to my intention with regard to his cousin.

* Mr. Belford had not yet sent him his last-written letter. His reason for which see Letter LXV. of this volume.

This convinces me, that if she *has* apprized her friends of my offers to her, they will not believe me to be in earnest, till they are assured that I am so from my own mouth. But then I understand, that the intended visit is an officiousness of Morden's own, without the desire of any of her friends.

Now, Jack, what can a man make of all this? My intelligence as to the continuance of her family's implacableness is not to be doubted; and yet when I read her letter, what can one say?—Surely, the dear little rogue will not lie!

I never knew her dispense with her word, but once; and that was, when she promised to forgive me after the dreadful fire that had like to have happened at our mother's, and yet would not see me the next day, and afterwards made her escape to Hampstead, in order to avoid forgiving me: and as she severely smarted for this departure from her honour given, (for it is a sad thing for good people to break their word when it is in their power to keep it,) one would not expect that she should set about deceiving again; more especially by the *premeditation of writing*. Thou, perhaps, wilt ask, what honest man is obliged to keep his promise with a highwayman? for well I know thy unmannerly way of making comparisons; but I say, *every* honest man is—and I will give thee an illustration.

Here is a marauding varlet, who demands your money, with a pistol at your breast. You have neither money nor valuable effects about you; and promise solemnly, if he will spare your life, that you will send him an agreed-upon sum, by such a day, to such a place.

The question is, if your life is not in the fellow's power?

How he came by the power is another question; for

which he must answer with *his* life when caught—so he runs risque for risque.

Now if he give you *your life*, does he not give, think you, a valuable consideration for the money you engage your honour to send him? If not, the sum must be exorbitant, or your life is a very paltry one, even in your own opinion.

I need not make the application; and I am sure that even thou thyself, who never sparest me, and thinkest thou knowest *my* heart by *thy own*, canst not possibly put the case in a stronger light against me.

Then, why do good people take upon themselves to censure, as they do, persons *less* scrupulous than themselves? Is it not because the latter allow themselves in *any* liberty, in order to carry a point? And can my not doing *my* duty, warrant another for not doing *his?*—Thou wilt not say it can.

And how would it sound, to put the case as strongly once more, as my greatest enemy would put it, both as to *fact* and in *words*—here has that profligate wretch Lovelace broken his vow with and deceived Miss Clarissa Harlowe.—A vile fellow! would an enemy say: but it is *like* him. But when it comes to be said that the pious Clarissa has broken her word with and deceived Lovelace; Good Lord! would every one say; sure it cannot be!

Upon my soul, Jack, such is the veneration I have for this admirable woman, that I am shocked barely at putting the case—and so wilt thou, if thou respectest her as thou oughtest: for thou knowest that men and women, all the world over, form their opinions of one another by each person's professions and known practices. In this lady, therefore, it would be as unpardonable to tell a wilful untruth, as it would be strange if I kept my word.

—In love cases, I mean; for, as to the rest, I am an honest, moral man, as all who know me can testify.

And what, after all, would this lady deserve, if she has deceived me in this case? For did she not set me prancing away, upon Lord M.'s best nag, to Lady Sarah's, and to Lady Betty's, with an erect and triumphing countenance, to show them her letter to me?

And let me tell thee, that I have received their congratulations upon it: Well, and now, cousin Lovelace, cries one: Well, and now, cousin Lovelace, cries t'other; I hope you will make the best of husbands to so excellent and so forgiving a lady!—And now we shall soon have the pleasure of looking upon you as a reformed man, added one! And now we shall see you in the way we have so long wished you to be in, cried out the other!

My cousins Montague also have been ever since rejoicing in the new relationship. Their charming cousin, and their lovely cousin, at every word! And how dearly they will love her! What lessons they will take from her! And yet Charlotte, who pretends to have the eye of an eagle, was for finding out some mystery in the style and manner, till I overbore her, and laughed her out of it.

As for Lord M. he has been in hourly expectation of being sent to with proposals of one sort or other from the Harlowes; and still we have it, that such proposals will be made by Colonel Morden when he comes; and that the Harlowes only put on a face of irreconcilableness, till they know the issue of Morden's visit, in order to make the better terms with us.

Indeed, if I had not undoubted reason, as I said, to believe the continuance of their antipathy to *me*, and implacableness to *her*, I should be apt to think there might be some foundation for my Lord's conjecture; for there

is a cursed deal of low cunning in all that family, except in the angel of it; who has so much generosity of soul, that she despises cunning, both name and thing.

What I mean by all this is, to let thee see what a stupid figure I shall make to all my own family, if my Clarissa has been capable, as Gulliver in his abominable Yahoo story phrases it, of saying the *thing that is not.* By my soul, Jack, if it were only that I should be *outwitted* by such a novice at plotting, and that it would make me look silly to my kinswomen here, who know I value myself upon my contrivances, it would vex me to the heart; and I would instantly clap a feather-bed into a coach and six, and fetch her away, sick or well, and marry her at my leisure.

But Col. Morden is come, and I must break off.

LETTER LXXIX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Monday Night, Aug. 28.

I DOUBT you will be all impatience that you have not heard from me since mine of Thursday last. You would be still more so, if you knew that I had by me a letter ready written.

I went early yesterday morning to Epsom; and found every thing disposed according to the directions I had left on Friday; and at night the solemn office was performed. Tourville was there; and behaved very decently, and with greater concern than I thought he would ever have expressed for any body.

Thomasine, they told me, in a kind of disguise, was in an obscure pew, out of curiosity (for it seems she was far from showing any tokens of grief) to see the last office performed for the man whose heart she had so largely contributed to break.

I was obliged to stay till this afternoon, to settle several necessary matters, and to direct inventories to be taken, in order for appraisement; for every thing is to be turned into money, by his will. I presented his sister with the hundred guineas the poor man left me as his executor, and desired her to continue in the house, and take the direction of every thing, till I could hear from his nephew at Antigua, who is *heir at law*. He had left her but fifty pounds, although he knew her indigence; and that it was owing to a vile husband, and not to herself, that she *was* indigent.

The poor man left about two hundred pounds in money, and two hundred pounds in two East-India bonds; and I will contrive, if I can, to make up the poor woman's fifty pounds, and my hundred guineas, two hundred pounds to her; and then she will have some little matter coming in certain, which I will oblige her to keep out of the hands of a son, who has completed that ruin which his father had very nearly effected.

I gave Tourville his twenty pounds, and will send you and Mowbray your's by the first order.

And so much for poor Belton's affairs till I see you.

I got to town in the evening, and went directly to Smith's. I found Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith in the back shop, and I saw they had been both in tears. They rejoiced to see me, however; and told me, that the Doctor and Mr. Goddard were but just gone; as was also the worthy clergyman, who often comes to pray by her; and

all three were of opinion, that she would hardly live to see the entrance of another week. I was not so much surprised as grieved; for I had feared as much when I left her on Saturday.

I sent up my compliments; and she returned, that she would take it for a favour if I would call upon her in the morning by eight o'clock. Mrs. Lovick told me that she had fainted away on Saturday, while she was writing, as she had done likewise the day before; and having received benefit then by a little turn in a chair, she was carried abroad again. She returned somewhat better; and wrote till late; yet had a pretty good night: and went to Covent-garden church in the morning; but came home so ill that she was obliged to lie down.

When she arose, seeing how much grieved Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith were for her, she made apologies for the trouble she gave them—You were happy, said she, before I came hither. It was a cruel thing in me to come among honest strangers, and to be sick, and die with you.

When they touched upon the irreconcileableness of her friends, I have had ill offices done me to them, said she, and they do not know how ill I am; nor will they believe any thing I should write. But yet I cannot sometimes forbear thinking it a little hard, that out of so many near and dear friends as I have living, not one of them will vouchsafe to look upon me. No old servant, no old friend, proceeded she, to be permitted to come near me, without being sure of incurring displeasure! And to have such a great work to go through by myself, a young creature as I am, and to have every thing to think of as to my temporal matters, and to order, to my very interment! No dear mother, said the sweet sufferer, to pray by me

and bless me!—No kind sister to sooth and comfort me! —But come, recollected she, how do I know but all is for the best—if I can but make a right use of my discomforts?—Pray for me, Mrs. Lovick—pray for me, Mrs. Smith, that I may—I have great need of your prayers.—This cruel man has discomposed me. His persecutions have given me a pain just here, [putting her hand to her heart.] What a step has he made me take to avoid him!—Who can *touch pitch, and not be defiled?* He has made a bad spirit take possession of me, I think—broken in upon all my duties—and will not yet, I doubt, let me be at rest. Indeed he is very cruel —but this is one of my trials, I believe. By God's grace, I shall be easier to-morrow, and especially if I have no more of his tormentings, and if I can get a tolerable night. And I will sit up till eleven, that I may.

She said, that though this was so heavy a day with her, she was at other times, within these few days past especially, blessed with bright hours; and particularly that she had now and then such joyful assurances, (which she hoped were not presumptuous ones,) that God would receive her to his mercy, that she could hardly contain herself, and was ready to think herself above this earth while she was in it: And what, inferred she to Mrs. Lovick, must be the state itself, the very aspirations after which have often cast a beamy light through the thickest darkness, and, when I have been at the lowest ebb, have dispelled the black clouds of despondency?—As I hope they soon will this spirit of repining.

She had a pretty good night, it seems; and this morning went in a chair to St. Dunstan's church.

The chairmen told Mrs. Smith, that after prayers (for she did not return till between nine and ten) they carried

her to a house in Fleet-street, whither they never waited on her before. And where dost think this was?—Why to an undertaker's! Good Heaven! what a woman is this! She went into the back shop, and talked with the master of it about half an hour, and came from him with great serenity; he waiting upon her to her chair with a respectful countenance, but full of curiosity and seriousness.

'Tis evident that she went to bespeak her *house* that she talked of*—*As soon as you can, Sir*, were her words to him as she got into the chair. Mrs. Smith told me this with the same surprise and grief that I heard it.

She was very ill in the afternoon, having got cold either at St. Dunstan's, or at chapel, and sent for the clergyman to pray by her; and the women, unknown to her, sent both for Dr. H. and Mr. Goddard: who were just gone, as I told you, when I came to pay my respects to her this evening.

And thus have I recounted from the good women what passed to this night since my absence.

I long for to-morrow, that I may see her: and yet it is such a melancholy longing as I never experienced, and know not how to describe.

Tuesday, Aug. 29.

I was at Smith's at half an hour after seven. They told me that the lady was gone in a chair to St. Dunstan's: but was better than she had been in either of the two preceding days; and that she said to Mrs. Lovick and Mrs. Smith, as she went into the chair, I have a good deal to answer for to you, my good friends, for my vapourish conversation of last night.

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* See Letter LXV. of this volume.

If, Mrs. Lovick, said she, smiling, I have no new matters to discompose me, I believe my spirits will hold out purely.

She returned immediately after prayers.

Mr. Belford, said she, as she entered the back shop where I was, (and upon my approaching her,) I am very glad to see you. You have been performing for your poor friend a kind last office. 'Tis not long ago since you did the same for a near relation. Is it not a little hard upon you, that these troubles should fall so thick to your lot? But they are charitable offices: and it is a praise to your humanity, that poor dying people know not where to choose so well.

I told her I was sorry to hear she had been so ill since I had the honour to attend her; but rejoiced to find that now she seemed a good deal better.

It will be sometimes better, and sometimes worse, replied she, with poor creatures, when they are balancing between life and death. But no more of these matters just now. I hope, Sir, you'll breakfast with me. I was quite vapourish yesterday. I had a very bad spirit upon me. Had I not, Mrs. Smith? But I hope I shall be no more so. And to-day I am perfectly serene. This day rises upon me as if it would be a bright one.

She desired me to walk up, and invited Mr. Smith and his wife, and Mrs. Lovick also, to breakfast with her. I was better pleased with her liveliness than with her looks.

The good people retiring after breakfast, the following conversation passed between us:

Pray, Sir, let me ask you, said she, if you think I may promise myself that I shall be no more molested by your friend?

I hesitated: For how could I answer for such a man?

What shall I do, if he comes again?—You see how I am.—I cannot fly from him now—If he has any pity left for the poor creature whom he has thus reduced, let him not come.—But have you heard from him lately? And will he come?

I hope not, Madam. I have not heard from him since Thursday last, that he went out of town, rejoicing in the hopes your letter gave him of a reconciliation between your friends and you, and that he might in good time see you at your father's; and he is gone down to give all his friends joy of the news, and is in high spirits upon it.

Alas! for me: I shall then surely have him come up to persecute me again! As soon as he discovers that that was only a stratagem to keep him away, he will come up, and who knows but even *now* he is upon the road? I thought I was so bad that I should have been out of his and every body's way before now; for I expected not that this contrivance would serve me above two or three days; and by this time he must have found out that I am not so happy as to have any hope of a reconciliation with my family; and then he will come, if it be only in revenge for what he will think a deceit, but is not, I hope, a wicked one.

I believe I looked surprised to hear her confess that her letter was a stratagem only; for she said, You wonder, Mr. Belford, I observe, that I could be *guilty of such an artifice. I doubt it is not right:* it was done in a hurry of spirits. How could I see a man who had so mortally injured me; yet pretending sorrow for his crimes, (and wanting to see me,) could behave with so much shocking levity, as he did to the honest people of the house? Yet, 'tis strange too, that neither you nor he found out my

meaning on perusal of my letter. You have seen what I wrote, no doubt?

I have, Madam. And then I began to account for it, as an *innocent* artifice.

Thus far indeed, Sir, it is *innocent*, that I meant him no hurt, and had a *right* to the effect I hoped for from it; and he had *none* to invade me. But have you, Sir, that letter of his in which he gives you (as I suppose he does) the copy of mine?

I have, Madam. And pulled it out of my letter-case. But hesitating—Nay, Sir, said she, be pleased to read my letter to yourself—I desire not to see *his*—and see if you can be longer a stranger to a meaning so obvious.

I read it to myself—Indeed, Madam, I can find nothing but that you are going down to Harlowe-place to be reconciled to your father and other friends: and Mr. Lovelace presumed that a letter from your sister, which he saw brought when he was at Mr. Smith's, gave you the welcome news of it.

She then explained all to me, and that, as I may say, in six words—A *religious* meaning is couched under it, and that's the reason that neither you nor I could find it out.

'Read but for my *father's house*, *Heaven*, said she, 'and for the interposition of my dear blessed friend, sup-'pose the *mediation* of my *Saviour* (which I humbly 'rely upon); and all the rest of the letter will be ac-'counted for.' I hope (repeated she) that it is a pardonable artifice. But I am afraid it is not strictly right.

I read it so, and stood astonished for a minute at her invention, her piety, her charity, and at thine and mine own stupidity to be thus taken in.

And now, thou vile Lovelace, what hast thou to do (the lady all consistent with herself, and no hopes left for

thee) but to hang, drown, or shoot thyself, for an outwitted boaster?

My surprise being a little over, she proceeded: As to the letter that came from my sister while your friend was here, you will *soon* see, Sir, that it is the cruellest letter she ever wrote me.

And then she expressed a deep concern for what might be the consequence of Colonel Morden's intended visit to you; and besought me, that if now, or at any time hereafter, I had opportunity to prevent any further mischief, without detriment or danger to myself, I would do it.

I assured her of the most particular attention to this and to all her commands; and that in a manner so agreeable to her, that she invoked a blessing upon me for my goodness, as she called it, to a desolate creature who suffered under the *worst of orphanage;* those were her words.

She then went back to her first subject, her uneasiness for fear of your molesting her again; and said, If you have any influence over him, Mr. Belford, prevail upon him that he will give me the assurance that the short remainder of my time shall be all my own. I have *need* of it. Indeed I have. Why will he wish to interrupt me in my duty? Has he not punished me enough for my preference of him to all his sex? Has he not destroyed my fame and my fortune? And will not his causeless vengeance upon me be complete, unless he ruin my soul too?—Excuse me, Sir, for this vehemence! But indeed it greatly imports me to know that I shall be no more disturbed by him. And yet, with all this aversion, I would sooner give way to his visit, though I were to expire the moment I saw him, than to be the cause of any fatal misunderstanding between you and him.

I assured her that I would make such a representation

of the matter to you, and of the state of her health, that I would undertake to *answer for you*, that you would not attempt to come near her.

And for this reason, Lovelace, do I lay the whole matter before you, and desire you will authorize me, as soon as this and mine of Saturday last come to your hands, to dissipate her fears.

This gave her a little satisfaction; and then she said that had I not told her that I *could* promise for you, she was determined, ill as she is, to remove somewhere out of my knowledge as well as out of your's. And yet, to have been obliged to leave people I am but just got acquainted with, said the poor lady, and to have died among perfect strangers, would have completed my hardships.

This conversation, I found, as well from the length as the nature of it, had fatigued her; and seeing her change colour once or twice, I made that my excuse, and took leave of her: desiring her permission, however, to attend her in the evening; and as often as possible; for I could not help telling her that, every time I saw her, I more and more considered her as a beatified spirit; and as one sent from Heaven to draw me after her out of the miry gulf in which I had been so long immersed.

And laugh at me if thou wilt; but it is true that, every time I approach her, I cannot but look upon her as one just entering into a companionship with saints and angels. This thought so wholly possessed me, that I could not help begging, as I went away, her prayers and her blessing, with the reverence due to an angel.

In the evening, she was so low and weak, that I took my leave of her in less than a quarter of an hour. I went directly home. Where, to the pleasure and wonder of my cousin and her family, I now pass many

honest evenings: which they impute to your being out of town.

I shall dispatch my packet to-morrow morning early by my own servant, to make thee amends for the suspense I must have kept thee in: thou'lt thank me for that, I hope; but wilt not, I am sure, for sending thy servant back without a letter.

I long for the particulars of the conversation between you and Mr. Morden: the lady, as I have hinted, is full of apprehensions about it. Send me back this packet when perused; for I have not had either time or patience to take a copy of it. And I beseech you enable me to make good my engagements to the poor lady that you will not invade her again.

LETTER LXXX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday, Aug. 30.

I HAVE a conversation to give you that passed between this admirable lady and Dr. H. which will furnish a new instance of the calmness and serenity with which she can talk of death, and prepare for it, as if it were an occurrence as familiar to her as dressing and undressing.

As soon as I had dispatched my servant to you with my letters of the 26th, 28th, and yesterday the 29th, I went to pay my duty to her, and had the pleasure to find her, after a tolerable night, pretty lively and cheerful. She was but just returned from her usual devotions; and Doctor H. alighted as she entered the door.

After inquiring how she did, and hearing her complaints of shortness of breath, (which she attributed to inward decay, precipitated by her late harasses, as well from her friends as from you,) he was for advising her to go into the air.

What will that do for me? said she: tell me truly, good Sir, with a cheerful aspect, (you know you cannot disturb me by it,) whether now you do not put on the *true* physician; and despairing that any thing in medicine will help me, advise me to the air, as the last resource?—Can you think the air will avail in such a malady as mine?

He was silent.

I ask, said she, because my friends (who will possibly some time hence inquire after the means I used for my recovery) may be satisfied that I omitted nothing which so worthy and so skilful a physician prescribed?

The air, Madam, may possibly help the difficulty of breathing, which has so lately attacked you.

But, Sir, you see how weak I am. You must see that I have been consuming from day to day; and now, if I can judge by what I feel in myself, putting her hand to her heart, I cannot continue long. If the air would very probably add to my days, though I am far from being *desirous* to have them lengthened, I would go into it; and the rather, as I know Mrs. Lovick would kindly accompany me. But if I were to be at the trouble of removing into new lodgings, (a trouble which I think now would be too much for me,) and this only to *die* in the country, I had rather the scene were to shut up here. For here have I meditated the spot, and the manner, and every thing, as well of the minutest as of the highest consequence, that can attend the solemn moments. So, Doctor, tell me truly, may I stay here, and be clear of any imputations of cur-

tailing, through wilfulness or impatiency, or through resentments which I hope I am got above, a life that might otherwise be prolonged?—Tell me, Sir; you are not talking to a coward in this respect; indeed you are not!—Unaffectedly smiling.

The doctor, turning to me, was at a loss what to say, lifting up his eyes only in admiration of her.

Never had any patient, said she, a more indulgent and more humane physician. But since you are loth to answer my question directly, I will put it in other words—You don't *enjoin* me to go into the air, Doctor, do you?

I do *not*, Madam. Nor do I now visit you as a physician; but as a person whose conversation I admire, and whose sufferings I condole. And, to explain myself more directly, as to the occasion of this day's visit in particular, I must tell you, Madam, that, understanding how much you suffer by the displeasure of your friends; and having no doubt but that, if they knew the way you are in, they would alter their conduct to you; and believing it must cut them to the heart, when too late, they shall be informed of every thing; I have resolved to apprize them by letter (stranger as I am to their persons) how necessary it is for some of them to attend you very speedily. For *their* sakes, Madam, let me press for your approbation of this measure.

She paused; and at last said, This is kind, very kind, in you, Sir. But I hope that you do not think me so preverse, and so obstinate, as to have left till now any means unessayed which I thought likely to move my friends in my favour. But now, Doctor, said she, I should be too much disturbed at their grief, if they were any of them to come or to send to me: and perhaps, if I found they still loved me, wish to live; and so should quit unwillingly that

life, which I am now really fond of quitting, and hope to quit as becomes a person who has had such a weaning-time as I have been favoured with.

I hope, Madam, said I, we are not so near as you apprehend to that deplorable catastrophe you hint at with such an amazing presence of mind. And therefore I presume to second the doctor's motion, if it were only for the sake of your father and mother, that they may have the satisfaction, if they *must* lose you, to think they were first reconciled to you.

It is very kindly, very humanely considered, said she. But, if you think me not so *very* near my last hour, let me desire this may be postponed till I see what effect my cousin Morden's mediation may have. Perhaps he may vouchsafe to make me a visit yet, after his intended interview with Mr. Lovelace is over; of which, who knows, Mr. Belford, but your next letters may give an account? I hope it will not be a fatal one to *any* body. Will you promise me, Doctor, to forbear writing for two days only, and I will communicate to you any thing that occurs in that time; and then you shall take your own way? Mean time, I repeat my thanks for your goodness to me.—Nay, dear Doctor, hurry not away from me so precipitately [for he was going, for fear of an offered fee]: I will no more affront you with tenders that have pained you for some time past: and since I must now, from this kindly-offered favour, look upon you only as a friend, I will assure you henceforth that I will give you no more uneasiness on that head: and now, Sir, I know I shall have the pleasure of seeing you oftener than heretofore.

The worthy gentleman was pleased with this assurance, telling her that he had always come to see her with great pleasure, but parted with her, on the account she hinted

at, with as much pain ; and that he should not have forborne to double his visits, could he have had this kind assurance as early as he wished for it.

There are few instances of like disinterestedness, I doubt, in this tribe. Till now I always held it for gospel, that *friendship* and *physician* were incompatible things ; and little imagined that a man of medicine, when he had given over his patient to death, would think of any visits but those of ceremony, that he might stand well with the family, against it came to their turns to go through his turnpike.

After the doctor was gone, she fell into a very serious discourse of the vanity of life, and the wisdom of preparing for death, while health and strength remained, and before the infirmities of body impaired the faculties of the mind, and disabled them from acting with the necessary efficacy and clearness : the whole calculated for every one's meridian, but particularly, as it was easy to observe, for thine and mine.

She was very curious to know farther particulars of the behaviour of poor Belton in his last moments. You must not wonder at my inquiries, Mr. Belford, said she ; For who is it, that is to undertake a journey into a country they never travelled to before, that inquires not into the difficulties of the road, and what accommodations are to be expected in the way ?

I gave her a brief account of the poor man's terrors, and unwillingness to die : and, when I had done, Thus, Mr. Belford, said she, must it always be with poor souls who have never thought of their long voyage till the moment they are to embark for it.

She made such other observations upon this subject as, coming from the mouth of a person who will so soon be a

companion for angels, I shall never forget. And indeed, when I went home, that I might engraft them the better on my memory, I entered them down in writing: but I will not let you see them until you are in a frame more proper to benefit by them than you are likely to be in one while.

Thus far I had written, when the unexpected early return of my servant with your packet (your's and he meeting at Slough, and exchanging letters) obliged me to leave off to give its contents a reading.—Here, therefore, I close this letter.

LETTER LXXXI.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Tuesday Morn. Aug. 29.

Now, Jack, will I give thee an account of what passed on occasion of the visit made us by Col. Morden.

He came on horseback, attended by one servant; and Lord M. received him as a relation of Miss Harlowe's with the highest marks of civility and respect.

After some general talk of the times, and of the weather, and such nonsense as Englishmen generally make their introductory topics to conversation, the Colonel addressed himself to Lord M. and to me, as follows:

I need not, my Lord, and Mr. Lovelace, as you know the relation I bear to the Harlowe family, make any apology for entering upon a subject, which, on account of that relation, you must think is the principal reason of the honour I have done myself in this visit.

Miss Harlowe, Miss Clarissa Harlowe's affair, said Lord

M. with his usual forward bluntness. That, Sir, is what you mean. She is, by all accounts, the most excellent woman in the world.

I am glad to hear that is your Lordship's opinion of her. It is every one's.

It is not only my opinion, Col. Morden (proceeded the prating Peer) but it is the opinion of all my family. Of my sisters, of my nieces, and of Mr. Lovelace himself.

Col. Would to Heaven it had been always Mr. Lovelace's opinion of her!

Lovel. You have been out of England, Colonel, a good many years. Perhaps you are not yet fully apprized of all the particulars of this case.

Col. I have been out of England, Sir, about seven years. My cousin Clary was then about *twelve* years of age: but never was there at *twenty* so discreet, so prudent, and so excellent a creature. All that knew her, or saw her, admired her. Mind and person, never did I see such promises of perfection in any young lady: and I am told, nor is it to be wondered at, that, as she advanced to maturity, she more than justified and made good those promises.—Then as to fortune—what her father, what her uncles, and what I myself, intended to do for her, besides what her grandfather had done—there is not a finer fortune in the county.

Lovel. All this, Colonel, and more than this, is Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and had it not been for the implacableness and violence of her family (all resolved to push her upon a match as unworthy *of* her as hateful *to* her) she had still been happy.

Col. I own, Mr. Lovelace, the truth of what you observed just now, that I am not thoroughly acquainted with all that has passed between you and my cousin. But per-

mit me to say, that when I first heard that you made your addresses to her, I knew but of one objection against you; that, indeed, a very great one: and upon a letter sent me, I gave her my free opinion upon the subject.* But had it not been for that, I own, that, in my private mind, there could not have been a more suitable match: for you are a gallant gentleman, graceful in your person, easy and genteel in your deportment, and in your family, fortunes, and expectations, happy as a man can wish to be. Then the knowledge I had of you in Italy (although, give me leave to say, your conduct there was not wholly unexceptionable) convinces me that you are brave: and few gentlemen come up to you in wit and vivacity. Your education has given you great advantages; your manners are engaging, and you have travelled; and I know, if you'll excuse me, you make better observations than you are governed by. All these qualifications make it not at all surprising that a young lady should love you: and that this love, joined to that indiscreet warmth wherewith my cousin's friends would have forced her inclinations in favour of men who are far your inferiors in the qualities I have named, should throw her upon your protection. But then, if there were these two strong motives, the one to *induce*, the other to *impel*, her, let me ask you, Sir, if she were not doubly entitled to generous usage from a man whom she chose for her protector; and whom, let me take the liberty to say, she could so amply reward for the protection he was to afford her?

Lovel. Miss Clarissa Harlowe was entitled, Sir, to the best usage that man could give her. I have no scruple to own it. I will always do her the justice she so well

* See Vol. IV. Letter VII.

deserves. I know what will be your inference; and have only to say, that time past cannot be recalled; perhaps I wish it could.

The Colonel then, in a very manly strain, set forth the wickedness of attempting a woman of virtue and character. He said, that men had generally too many advantages from the weakness, credulity, and inexperience of the fair sex: that their early learning, which chiefly consisted in inflaming novels, and idle and improbable romances, contributed to enervate and weaken their minds: that his cousin, however, he was sure, was above the reach of common seduction, and not to be influenced to the rashness her parents accused her of, by weaker motives than *their* violence, and the most solemn promises on *my part:* but, nevertheless, *having* those motives, and her prudence (eminent as it was) being rather the effect of *constitution* than *experience*, (a fine advantage, however, he said, to ground an unblamable future life upon,) she might not be apprehensive of bad designs in a man she loved: it was, therefore, a very heinous thing to abuse the confidence of such a woman.

He was going on in this trite manner; when, interrupting him, I said, These general observations, Colonel, suit not perhaps this particular case. But you yourself are a man of gallantry; and, possibly, were you to be put to the question, might not be able to vindicate every action of your life, any more than I.

Col. You are welcome, Sir, to put what questions you please to me. And, I thank God, I can both *own* and be *ashamed* of my errors.

Lord M. looked at *me;* but as the Colonel did not by his manner seem to intend a reflection, I had no occasion to take it for one; especially as I can as readily *own* my

errors, as he, or any man, can his, whether *ashamed* of them or not.

He proceeded. As you seem to call upon me, Mr. Lovelace, I will tell you (without boasting of it) what has been my general practice, till lately, that I hope I have reformed it a good deal.

I have taken liberties, which the laws of morality will by no means justify; and once I should have thought myself warranted to cut the throat of any young fellow who should make as free with a sister of mine as I have made with the sisters and daughters of others. But then I took care never to promise any thing I intended not to perform. A modest ear should as soon have heard downright obscenity from my lips, as matrimony, if I had not intended it. Young ladies are generally ready enough to believe we mean honourably, if they love us; and it would look like a strange affront to their virtue and charms, that it should be supposed *needful* to put the question whether in your address you mean a wife. But when once a man makes a promise, I think it ought to be performed; and a woman is well warranted to appeal to every one against the perfidy of a deceiver; and is always sure to have the world of her side.

Now, Sir, continued he, I believe you have so much honour as to own, that you could not have made way to so eminent a virtue, without promising marriage; and that very explicitly and solemnly—

I know very well, Colonel, interrupted I, all you would say. You will excuse me, I am sure, that I break in upon you, when you find it is to answer the end you drive at.

I own to you then that I have acted very unworthily by Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and I'll tell you farther, that

I heartily repent of my ingratitude and baseness to her. Nay, I will say *still* farther, that I am so grossly culpable *as to her*, that even to plead that the abuses and affronts I daily received from her implacable relations were in any manner a provocation to me to act vilely by her, would be a mean and low attempt to excuse myself—so low and so mean, that it would doubly condemn me. And if you can say worse, speak it.

He looked upon Lord M. and then upon me, two or three times. And my Lord said, My kinsman speaks what he thinks, I'll answer for him.

Lovel. I do, Sir; and what can I say more? And what farther, in your opinion, can be done?

Col. Done! Sir? Why, Sir, [in a haughty tone he spoke,] I need not tell you that reparation follows repentance. And I hope you make no scruple of justifying your sincerity as to the one by the other.

I hesitated, (for I relished not the manner of his speech, and his haughty accent,) as undetermined whether to take proper notice of it or not.

Col. Let me put this question to you, Mr. Lovelace: Is it true, as I have heard it is, that you would marry my cousin, if she would have you?—What say you, Sir?—

This wound me up a peg higher.

Lovel. Some questions, as they may be put, imply *commands*, Colonel. I would be glad to know how I am to take your's? And what is to be the end of your interrogatories?

Col. My questions are not meant by me as commands, Mr. Lovelace. The *end* is, to prevail upon a gentleman to act *like* a gentleman, and a man of honour.

Lovel. (briskly) And by what arguments, Sir, do you propose to prevail upon me?

Col. By what arguments, Sir, prevail upon a gentleman to act like a gentleman!—I am surprised at that question from Mr. Lovelace.

Lovel. Why so, Sir?

Col. Why so, Sir! (*angrily*)—Let me—

Lovel. (*interrupting*) I don't choose, Colonel, to be repeated upon, in that accent.

Lord M. Come, come, gentlemen, I beg of you to be willing to understand one another. You young gentlemen are so warm—

Col. Not I, my Lord—I am neither very young, nor unduly warm. Your nephew, my Lord, can make me be every thing he would have me to be.

Lovel. And that shall be, whatever you please to be, Colonel.

Col. (*fiercely*) The choice be your's, Mr. Lovelace. Friend or foe! as you do or are willing to do justice to one of the finest women in the world.

Lord M. I guessed, from both your characters, what would be the case when you met. Let me interpose, gentlemen, and beg you but to understand one another. You *both shoot at one mark;* and, if you are patient, will both *hit it.* Let me beg of you, Colonel, to give no challenges—

Col. Challenges, my Lord!—They are things I ever was readier to accept than to offer. But does your Lordship think that a man, so nearly related as I have the honour to be to the most accomplished woman on earth,—

Lord M. (*interrupting*) We all allow the excellencies of the lady—and we shall all take it as the greatest honour to be allied to her that can be conferred upon us.

Col. So you ought, my Lord!—

A perfect *Chamont;* thought I *.

Lord M. So we *ought*, Colonel! and so we *do!*—and pray let *every one* do as he ought!—and no *more* than he *ought;* and you, Colonel, let me tell you, will not be so hasty.

Lovel. (*coolly*) Come, come, Col. Morden, don't let this dispute, whatever you intend to make of it, go farther than with you and me. You deliver yourself in very high terms. Higher than ever I was talked to in my life. But here, beneath this roof, 'twould be inexcusable for me to take that notice of it which, perhaps, it would become me to take elsewhere.

Col. This is spoken as I wish the man to speak whom I should be pleased to call my friend, if all his actions were of a piece; and as I would have the man speak whom I would think it worth my while to call my foe. I love a man of spirit, as I love my soul. But, Mr. Lovelace, as my Lord thinks we aim at *one mark*, let me say, that were we permitted to be alone for six minutes, I dare say, we should soon understand one another perfectly well.—And he moved to the door.

Lovel. I am entirely of your opinion, Sir; and will attend you.

My Lord rung, and stept between us: Colonel, return, I beseech you return, said he: for he had stept out of the room while my Lord held me—Nephew, you shall not go out.

The bell and my Lord's raised voice brought in Mowbray, and Clements, my Lord's gentleman; the former in his careless way, with his hands behind him, What's the matter, Bobby? What's the matter, my Lord?

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* See *Otway*'s Orphan.

Only, only, only, stammered the agitated peer, these young gentlemen are, are, are—*are* young gentlemen, that's all.—Pray, Colonel Morden, [who again entered the room with a sedater aspect,] let this cause have a fair trial, I beseech you.

Col. With all my heart, my Lord.

Mowbray whispered me, What is the cause, Bobby?—Shall I take the gentleman to task for thee, my boy?

Not for the world, whispered I. The Colonel is a gentleman, and I desire you'll not say one word.

Well, well, well, Bobby, I have done. I can turn thee loose to the best man upon God's earth; that's all, Bobby; strutting off to the other end of the room.

Col. I am sorry, my Lord, I should give your Lordship the least uneasiness. I came not with such a design.

Lord M. Indeed, Colonel, I thought you did, by your taking fire so quickly. I am glad to hear you say you did not. How soon a little *spark kindles into a flame;* especially when it meets with such combustible spirits!

Col. If I had had the least thought of proceeding to extremities, I am sure Mr. Lovelace would have given me the honour of a meeting where I should have been less an intruder: but I came with an amicable intention; to reconcile differences rather than to widen them.

Lovel. Well then, Colonel Morden, let us enter upon the subject in your own way. I don't know the man I should sooner choose to be upon terms with than one whom Miss Clarissa Harlowe so much respects. But I cannot bear to be treated, either in word or accent, in a menacing way.

Lord M. Well, well, well, well, gentlemen, this is somewhat like. *Angry men make to themselves beds of nettles*, and, when they lie down in them, are uneasy

with every body. But I hope you are friends. Let me hear you say you are. I am persuaded, Colonel, that you don't know all this unhappy story. You don't know how desirous my kinsman is, as well as all of us, to have this matter end happily. You don't know, do you, Colonel, that Mr. Lovelace, at all our requests, is disposed to marry the lady?

Col. At all your requests, my Lord?—I should have hoped that Mr. Lovelace was disposed to do justice for the *sake* of justice; and when at the same time the doing of justice was doing himself the highest honour.

Mowbray lifted up his before half-closed eyes to the Colonel, and glanced them upon me.

Lovel. This is in very high language, Colonel.

Mowbr. By my soul, I thought so.

Col. High language, Mr. Lovelace? Is it not *just* language?

Lovel. It is, Colonel. And I think, the man that does honour to Miss Clarissa Harlowe, does me honour. But, nevertheless, there is a manner in speaking, that may be liable to exception, where the words, without that manner, can bear none.

Col. Your observation in the general is undoubtedly just: but, *if* you have the value for my cousin that you say you have, you must needs think—

Lovel. You must allow me, Sir, to interrupt you—IF I have the value *I say* I have—I hope, Sir, when *I say* I *have* that value, there is no room for that *if*, pronounced as you pronounced it with an emphasis.

Col. You have broken in upon me twice, Mr. Lovelace. I am as little accustomed to be broken in upon, as you are to be *repeated* upon.

Lord M. Two barrels of gunpowder, by my con-

science! What a devil will it signify talking, if thus you are to blow one another up at every word?

Lovel. No man of honour, my Lord, will be easy to have his veracity called in question, though but by implication.

Col. Had you heard me out, Mr. Lovelace, you would have found, that my *if* was rather an *if* of *inference*, than of *doubt*. But 'tis, really, a strange liberty gentlemen of free principles take; who at the same time that they would resent unto death the imputation of being capable of telling an untruth to a man, will not scruple to break through the most solemn oaths and promises to a woman. I must assure you, Mr. Lovelace, that I always made a conscience of my vows and promises.

Lovel. You did right, Colonel. But let me tell you, Sir, that you know not the man you talk to, if you imagine he is not able to rise to a proper resentment, when he sees his generous confessions taken for a mark of base-spiritedness.

Col. (warmly, and with a sneer,) Far be it from me, Mr. Lovelace, to impute to you the baseness of spirit you speak of; for what would that be but to imagine that a man, who has done a very flagrant injury, is not ready to show his *bravery* in defending it—

Mowbr. This is d——d severe, Colonel. It is, by Jove. I could not take so much at the hands of any man breathing as Mr. Lovelace before this took at your's.

Col. Who are you, Sir? What pretence have you to interpose in a cause where there is an acknowledged guilt on one side, and the honour of a considerable family wounded in the tenderest part by that guilt on the other?

Mowbr. (whispering to the Colonel) My dear child, you will oblige me highly if you will give me the op-

portunity of answering your question. And was going out.

The Colonel was held in by my Lord. And I brought in Mowbray.

Col. Pray, my good Lord, let me attend this officious gentleman, I beseech you do. I will wait upon your Lordship in three minutes, depend upon it.

Lovel. Mowbray, is this acting like a friend by me, to suppose me incapable of answering for myself? And shall a man of honour and bravery, as I know Colonel Morden to be, (rash as perhaps in this visit he has shown himself,) have it to say, that he comes to my Lord M.'s house, in a manner naked as to attendants and friends, and shall not for that reason be rather borne with than insulted? This moment, my dear Mowbray, leave us. You have really no concern in this business; and if you are my friend, I desire you'll ask the Colonel pardon for interfering in it in the manner you have done.

Mowbr. Well, well, Bob.; thou shalt be arbiter in this matter; I know I have no business in it—and, Colonel, *(holding out his hand,)* I leave you to one who knows how to defend his own cause as well as any man in England.

Col. (*taking Mowbray's hand, at Lord M.'s request,*) You need not tell me *that*, Mr. Mowbray. I have no doubt of Mr. Lovelace's ability to defend his own cause, were it a cause to be defended. And let me tell you, Mr. Lovelace, that I am astonished to think that a brave man, and a generous man, as you have appeared to be in two or three instances that you have given in the little knowledge I have of you, should be capable of acting as you have done by the most excellent of her sex.

Lord M. Well, but, gentlemen, now Mr. Mowbray

is gone, and you have both shown instances of courage and generosity to boot, let me desire you to lay your heads together amicably, and think whether there be any thing to be done to make all end happily for the lady?

Lovel. But hold, my Lord, let me say one thing, now Mowbray *is* gone; and that is, that I think a gentleman ought not to put up tamely one or two severe things that the Colonel has said.

Lord M. What the devil canst thou mean? I thought all had been over. Why thou hast nothing to do but to confirm to the Colonel that thou art willing to marry Miss Harlowe, if she will have thee.

Col. Mr. Lovelace will not scruple to say *that*, I suppose, notwithstanding all that has passed: but if you think, Mr. Lovelace, I have said any thing I should *not* have said, I suppose it is this, that the man who has shown so little of the *thing* honour, to a defenceless unprotected woman, ought not to stand so nicely upon the *empty name* of it, with a man who is expostulating with him upon it. I am sorry to have cause to say this, Mr. Lovelace; but I would, on the same occasion, repeat it to a king upon his throne, and surrounded by all his guards.

Lord M. But what is all this, but more *sacks upon the mill?* more *coals upon the fire?* You have a mind to quarrel both of you, I see that. Are you not willing, Nephew, are you not *most* willing, to marry this lady, if she can be prevailed upon to have you?

Lovel. D——n me, my Lord, if I'd marry my empress upon such treatment as this.

Lord M. Why now, Bob., thou art more choleric than the Colonel. It was *his* turn just now. And now you see he is cool, you are all gunpowder.

Lovel. I own the Colonel has many advantages over

me; but, perhaps, there is one advantage he has not, if it were put to the trial.

Col. I came not hither, as I said before, to seek the occasion: but if it be offered me, I won't refuse it—and since we find we disturb my good Lord M. I'll take my leave, and will go home by the way of St. Alban's.

Lovel. I'll see you part of the way, with all my heart, Colonel.

Col. I accept your civility very cheerfully, Mr. Lovelace.

Lord M. (*interposing again, as we were both for going out,*) And what will this do, gentlemen? Suppose you kill one another, will the matter be bettered or worsted by that? Will the lady be made happier or unhappier, do you think, by either or both of your deaths? Your characters are too well known to make fresh instances of the courage of either needful. And, I think, if the honour of the lady is your view, Colonel, it can be no other way so effectually promoted as by marriage. And, Sir, if *you* would use your interest with her, it is very probable that *you* may succeed, though nobody else can.

Lovel. I think, my Lord, I have said all that a man can say, (since what is passed cannot be recalled:) and you see Colonel Morden rises in proportion to my coolness, till it is necessary for me to assert myself, or even *he* would despise me.

Lord M. Let me ask you, Colonel, have you any way, any method, that you think reasonable and honourable to propose, to bring about a reconciliation with the lady? That is what we all wish for. And I can tell you, Sir, it is not a little owing to her family, and to their implacable usage of her, that her resentments are heightened against

my kinsman; who, however, has used her vilely; but is willing to repair her wrongs.—

Lovel. Not, my Lord, for the sake of her family; nor for this gentleman's haughty behaviour; but for *her own sake*, and in full sense of the wrongs I have done her.

Col. As to my haughty behaviour, as you call it, Sir, I am mistaken if you would not have gone beyond it in the like case of a relation so meritorious, and so unworthily injured. And, Sir, let me tell you, that if your motives are not love, honour, and justice, and if they have the least tincture of mean compassion for *her*, or of an uncheerful assent on *your part*, I am sure it will neither be desired or accepted by a person of my cousin's merit and sense; nor shall I wish that it should.

Lovel. Don't think, Colonel, that I am meanly compounding off a debate, that I should as willingly go through with you as to eat or drink, if I have the occasion given me for it: but thus much I will tell you, that my Lord, that Lady Sarah Sadlier, Lady Betty Lawrance, my two cousins Montague, and myself, have written to her in the most solemn and sincere manner, to offer her such terms as no one but herself would refuse, and this long enough before Colonel Morden's arrival was dreamt of.

Col. What reason, Sir, may I ask, does she give, against listening to so powerful a mediation, and to such offers?

Lovel. It looks like capitulating, or else—

Col. It looks not like any such thing to *me*, Mr. Lovelace, who have as good an opinion of your spirit as man can have. And what, pray, is the part I act, and my motives for it? Are they not, in desiring that justice may be done to my cousin Clarissa Harlowe, that I seek to es-

tablish the honour of *Mrs. Lovelace*, if matters can once be brought to bear?

Lovel. Were she to honour me with her acceptance of that name, Mr. Morden, I should not want you or any man to assert the honour of Mrs. Lovelace.

Col. I believe it. But till she *has* honoured you with that acceptance, she is nearer to me than to you, Mr. Lovelace. And I speak this, only to show you that, in the part I take, I mean rather to deserve your thanks than your displeasure, though against *yourself*, were there occasion. Nor ought you take it amiss, if you rightly weigh the matter: For, Sir, whom does a lady want protection against but her injurers? And who has been her *greatest* injurer?—Till, therefore, she becomes entitled to your protection, as *your wife*, you yourself cannot refuse me some merit in wishing to have justice done *my cousin*. But, Sir, you were going to say, that if it were not to look like capitulating, you would hint the reasons my cousin gives against accepting such an honourable mediation?

I then told him of my sincere offers of marriage: 'I 'made no difficulty, I said, to own my apprehensions, 'that my unhappy behaviour to her had greatly affected 'her: but that it was the implacableness of her friends 'that had thrown her into despair, and given her a con- 'tempt for life.' I told him, 'that she had been so good 'as to send me a letter to divert me from a visit my heart 'was set upon making her: a letter on which I built 'great hopes, because she assured me in it that she 'was *going to her father's;* and that *I might see her* '*there, when she was received, if it were not my own* '*fault.*'

Col. Is it possible? And were you, Sir, thus earnest? And did she send you such a letter?

Lord M. confirmed both; and also, that, in obedience to her desires, and that intimation, I had come down without the satisfaction I had proposed to myself in seeing her.

It is very true, Colonel, said I: and I should have told you this before: but your heat made me decline it; for, as I said, it had an appearance of meanly capitulating with you. An abjectness of heart, of which, had I been capable, I should have despised *myself* as much as I might have expected *you* would despise me.

Lord M. proposed to enter into the proof of all this. He said, in his phraseological way, *That one story was good till another was heard;* that the Harlowe family and I, 'twas true, had behaved like so many *Orsons* to one another; and that they had been very free with all our family besides: that nevertheless, for the lady's sake, more than for their's, or even for *mine*, (he could tell me,) he would do greater things for me than they could ask, if she could be brought to have me: and that this he *wanted* to declare, and would *sooner* have declared, if he could have brought us sooner to patience, and a good understanding.

The Colonel made excuses for his warmth, on the score of his affection to his cousin.

My regard for her made me readily admit them: and so a fresh bottle of Burgundy, and another of Champagne, being put upon the table, we sat down in good humour, after all this blustering, in order to enter closer into the particulars of the case: which I undertook, at both their desires, to do.

But these things must be the subject of another letter, which shall immediately follow this, if it do not accompany it.

Mean time you will observe that a bad cause gives a man great disadvantages: for I myself think that the interrogatories put to me with so much spirit by the Colonel made me look cursedly mean; at the same time that it gave him a superiority which I know not how to allow to the best man in Europe. So that, literally speaking, as a *good man* would infer, guilt is its own punisher: in that it makes the most lofty spirit look like the miscreant he is—a *good man*, I say: So, Jack, *proleptically* I add, *thou* hast no right to make the observation.

LETTER LXXXII.

MR. LOVELACE.

[*In continuation.*]

Tuesday Afternoon, Aug. 29.

I WENT back, in this part of our conversation, to the day that I was obliged to come down to attend my Lord in the dangerous illness which *some* feared would have been his last.

I told the Colonel, 'what earnest letters I had written 'to a particular friend, to engage him to prevail upon the 'lady not to slip a day that had been proposed for the pri-'vate celebration of our nuptials; and of my letters*

* See Letters XIV. XV. XVI. XX. of Vol. VI.

'written to herself on that subject;' for I had stepped to 'my closet, and fetched down all the letters and draughts 'and copies of letters relating to this affair.

I read to him 'several passages in the copies of those 'letters, which, thou wilt remember, make not a little to 'my honour.' And I told him, 'that I wished I had 'kept copies of those to my friend on the same occasion; 'by which he would have seen how much in earnest I was 'in my professions to her, although she would not an-'swer one of them;' and thou mayest remember, that one of those four letters accounted to herself why I was desirous she should remain where I had left her*.

I then proceeded to give him an account 'of the visit 'made by Lady Sarah and Lady Betty to Lord M. and 'me, in order to induce me to do her justice: of my rea-'diness to comply with their desires; and of their high 'opinion of her merit: of the visit made to Miss Howe by 'my cousins Montague, in the name of us all, to engage 'her interest with her friend in my behalf: of my con-'versation with Miss Howe, at a private assembly, to 'whom I gave the same assurances, and besought her 'interest with her friend.'

I then read the copy of the letter (though so much to my disadvantage) which was written to her by Miss Charlotte Montague, Aug. 1†. entreating her alliance in the names of all our family.

This made him ready to think that his fair cousin carried her resentment against me too far. He did not imagine, he said, that either myself or our family had been so much in earnest.

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* See Letter XIV. of Vol. VI.

† See Letter XXIII. of this volume.

So thou seest, Belford, that it is but glossing over *one* part of a story, and omitting *another*, that will make a bad cause a good one at any time. What an admirable lawyer should I have made! And what a poor hand would this charming creature, with all her innocence, have made of it in a court of justice against a man who had so much to *say* and to *show* for himself!

I then hinted at the generous annual tender which Lord M. and his sisters made to his fair cousin, in apprehension that she might suffer by her friends' implacableness.

And this also the Colonel highly applauded, and was pleased to lament the unhappy misunderstanding between the two families, which had made the Harlowes less fond of an alliance with a family of so much honour as this instance showed ours to be.

I then told him, 'That having, by my friend, [meaning 'thee,] who was admitted into her presence, (and who had 'always been an admirer of her virtues, and had given me 'such advice from time to time in relation to her as I 'wished I had followed,) been assured that a visit from me 'would be very disagreeable to her, I once more resolved 'to try what a letter would do; and that, accordingly, 'on the seventh of August, I wrote her one.

'This, Colonel, is the copy of it. I was then out of 'humour with my Lord M. and the ladies of my family. 'You will, therefore, read it to yourself*.'

This letter gave him high satisfaction. You write here, Mr. Lovelace, from your heart. 'Tis a letter full of penitence and acknowledgment. Your request is reasonable—To be forgiven only as you shall appear to deserve it after a

* See Letter XXXVI. of this volume.

time of probation, which you leave to her to fix. Pray, Sir, did she return an answer to this letter?

She did, but with *reluctance*, I own, and not till I had declared by my friend, that, if I could not procure one, I would go up to town, and throw myself at her feet.

I wish I might be permitted to see it, Sir, or to hear such parts of it read as you shall think proper.

Turning over my papers, Here it is, Sir.* I will make no scruple to put it into your hands.

This is very obliging, Mr. Lovelace.

He read it. My charming cousin!—How strong her resentments!—Yet how charitable her wishes! Good Heaven! that such an excellent creature—But, Mr. Lovelace, it is to your regret, as much as to mine, I doubt not—

Interrupting him, I swore that it was.

So it ought, said he. Nor do I wonder that it should be so. I shall tell you by-and-by, proceeded he, how much she suffers with her friends by false and villanous reports. But, Sir, will you permit me to take with me these two letters? I shall make use of them to the advantage of you both.

I told him I would oblige him with all my heart. And this he took very kindly (as he had reason); and put them in his pocket-book, promising to return them in a few days.

I then told him, 'That upon this her refusal, I took 'upon myself to go to town, in hopes to move her 'in my favour; and that, though I went without giving 'her notice of my intention, yet had she got some notion

* See Letter XL. of this volume.

'of my coming, and so contrived to be out of the way: 'and at last, when she found I was fully determined at all 'events to see her, before I went abroad, (which I *shall* 'do, said I, if I cannot prevail upon her,) she sent me 'the letter I have already mentioned to you, desiring me 'to suspend my purposed visit: and that for a reason 'which amazes and confounds me; because I don't find 'there is any thing in it: and yet I never knew her once 'dispense with her word; for she always made it a 'maxim, that *it was not lawful to do evil, that good 'might come of it:* and yet in this letter, for no reason 'in the world but to avoid seeing me (to gratify an humour 'only) has she sent me out of town, depending upon the 'assurance she had given me.'

Col. This is indeed surprising. But I cannot believe that my cousin, for such an end *only*, or indeed for *any* end, according to the character I hear of her, should stoop to make use of such an artifice.

Lovel. This, Colonel, is the thing that astonishes me; and yet, see here!—This is the letter she wrote me—Nay, Sir, 'tis her own hand.

Col. I see it is; and a charming hand it is.

Lovel. You observe, Colonel, that all her hopes of reconciliation with her parents are from you. You are her *dear blessed friend!* She always talked of you with delight.

Col. Would to Heaven I had come to England before she left Harlowe-place!—Nothing of this had then happened. Not a man of those whom I have heard that her friends proposed for her should have had her. Nor you, Mr. Lovelace, unless I had found you to be the man every one who sees you must wish you to be: and if you *had* been that man, no one living should I have preferred to you for such an excellence.

My Lord and I both joined in the wish: and 'faith I wished it most cordially.

The Colonel read the letter twice over, and then returned it to me. 'Tis all a mystery, said he. I can make nothing of it. For, alas! her friends are as averse to a reconciliation as ever.

Lord M. I could not have thought it. But don't you think there is something very favourable to my nephew in this letter—something that looks as if the lady would comply at last?

Col. Let me die if I know what to make of it. This letter is very different from her preceding one!—You returned an answer to it, Mr. Lovelace?

Lovel. An answer, Colonel! No doubt of it. And an answer full of transport. I told her, 'I would directly 'set out for Lord M.'s, in obedience to her will. I told 'her that I would consent to any thing she should com- 'mand, in order to promote this happy reconciliation. 'I told her that it should be my hourly study, to the end 'of my life, to deserve a goodness so transcendent.' But I cannot forbear saying that I am not a little shocked and surprised, if nothing more be meant by it than to get me into the country without seeing her.

Col. That can't be the thing, depend upon it, Sir. There must be more in it than that. For, were that all, she must think you would soon be undeceived, and that you would then most probably resume your intention—unless, indeed, she depended upon seeing *me* in the interim, as she knew I was arrived. But I own I know not what to make of it. Only that she does me a great deal of honour, if it be me that she calls her *blessed friend, whom she always loved and honoured.* Indeed I ever loved her: and if I die unmarried, and without children,

shall be as kind to her as her grandfather was: and the rather, as I fear that there is too much of envy and self-love in the resentments her brother and sister endeavour to keep up in her father and mother against her. But I shall know better how to judge of this, when my cousin James comes from Edinburgh; and he is every hour expected.

But let me ask you, Mr. Lovelace, what is the name of your friend, who is admitted so easily into my cousin's presence? Is it not Belford, pray?

Lovel. It is, Sir; and Mr. Belford's a man of honour; and a great admirer of your fair cousin.

Was I right, as to the *first*, Jack? The *last* I have such strong proof of, that it makes me question the *first*; since she would not have been out of the way of my intended visit but for thee.

Col. Are you sure, Sir, that Mr. Belford is a man of honour?

Lovel. I can swear for him, Colonel. What makes you put this question?

Col. Only this: that an officious pragmatical novice has been sent up to inquire into my cousin's life and conversation: And, would you believe it? the frequent visits of this gentleman have been interpreted basely to her disreputation.—Read that letter, Mr. Lovelace; and you will be shocked at every part of it.

This cursed letter, no doubt, is from the young Levite, whom thou, Jack, describest as making inquiry of Mrs. Smith about Miss Harlowe's character and visiters.*

I believe I was a quarter of an hour in reading it: for I made it, though not a short one, six times as long as it is, by the additions of oaths and curses to every pedantic line.

* See Letter XXXVIII. of this volume.

Lord M. too helped to lengthen it, by the like execrations. And thou, Jack, wilt have as much reason to curse it as we.

You cannot but see, said the Colonel, when I had done reading it, that this fellow has been *officious* in his malevolence; for what he says is mere hearsay, and that hearsay conjectural scandal without fact, or the appearance of fact, to support it; so that an unprejudiced eye, upon the face of the letter, would condemn the writer of it, as I did, and acquit my cousin. But yet, such is the spirit by which the rest of my relations are governed, that they run away with the belief of the worst it insinuates, and the dear creature has had shocking letters upon it; the pedant's hints are taken; and a voyage to one of the colonies has been proposed to her, as the only way to avoid Mr. Belford and you. I have not seen these letters indeed; but they took a pride in repeating some of their contents, which must have cut the poor soul to the heart; and these, joined to her former sufferings,—What have you not, Mr. Lovelace, to answer for?

Lovel. Who the devil could have expected such consequences as these? Who could have believed there could be parents so implacable? Brother and sister so envious? And, give me leave to say, a lady so immovably fixed against the only means that could be taken to put all right with every body?—And what now can be done?

Lord M. I have great hopes that Col. Morden may yet prevail upon his cousin. And, by her last letter, it runs in my mind that she has some thoughts of forgiving all that's past. Do you think, Colonel, if there should *not* be such a thing as a reconciliation going forward at present, that her letter may not imply that, if we *could* bring such a thing to bear with her friends, she would be reconciled with Mr. Lovelace?

Col. Such an artifice would better become the Italian subtilty than the English simplicity. Your Lordship has been in Italy, I presume?

Lovel. My Lord has read Boccacio, perhaps; and that's as well, as to the hint he gives, which may be borrowed from one of that author's stories. But Miss Clarissa Harlowe is above all artifice. She must have some meaning I cannot fathom.

Col. Well, my Lord, I can only say that I will make some use of the letters Mr. Lovelace has obliged me with: and after I have had some talk with my cousin James, who is hourly expected; and when I have dispatched two or three affairs that press upon me; I will pay my respects to my dear cousin; and shall then be able to form a better judgment of things. Mean time I will write to her; for I have sent to inquire about her, and find she wants consolation.

Lovel. If you favour me, Colonel, with the d—d letter of that fellow Brand for a day or two, you will oblige me.

Col. I will. But remember, the man is a parson, Mr. Lovelace; an innocent one too, they say. Else I had been at him before now. And these college novices, who think they know every thing in their cloisters, and that all learning lies in *books*, make dismal figures when they come into the world among *men* and *women*.

Lord M. Brand! Brand! It should have been *Firebrand*, I think in my conscience!

Thus ended this doughty conference.

I cannot say, Jack, but I am greatly taken with Col. Morden. He is brave and generous, and knows the world; and then his contempt of the parsons is a certain sign that he is one of *us*.

We parted with great civility: Lord M. (not a little

pleased that we did, and as greatly taken with the Colonel) repeated his wish, after the Colonel was gone, that he had arrived in time to save the lady, if that would have done it.

I wish so too. For by my soul, Jack, I am every day more and more uneasy about her. But I hope she is not so ill as I am told she is.

I have made Charlotte transcribe the letter of this *Firebrand*, as my Lord calls him; and will enclose her copy of it. All thy phlegm I know will be roused into vengeance when thou readest it.

I know not what to advise as to showing it to the lady. Yet, perhaps, she will be able to reap more satisfaction than concern from it, knowing her own innocence; in that it will give her to hope that her friends' treatment of her is owing as much to misrepresentation as to their own natural implacableness. Such a mind as her's, I know, would be glad to find out the shadow of a reason for the shocking letters the Colonel says they have sent her, and for their proposal to her of going to some one of the colonies [confound them all—but, if I begin to curse, I shall never have done]—Then it may put her upon such a defence as she might be glad of an opportunity to make, and to shame them for their monstrous credulity—but this I leave to thy own fat-headed prudence—Only it vexes me to the heart, that even scandal and calumny should dare to surmise the bare possibility of any man sharing the favours of a woman, whom now methinks I could worship with a veneration due only to a divinity.

Charlotte and her sister could not help weeping at the base aspersion: When, when, said Patty, lifting up her hands, will this sweet lady's sufferings be at an end?—O cousin Lovelace!—

And thus am I blamed for every one's faults!—When her brutal father curses her, it is I. I upbraid her with her severe mother. The implacableness of her stupid uncles is all mine. The virulence of her brother, and the spite and envy of her sister, are entirely owing to me. The letter of this rascal Brand is of my writing—O Jack, what a wretch is thy Lovelace!

Returned without a letter!—This d—d fellow Will. is returned without a letter!—Yet the rascal tells me that he hears you have been writing to me these two days!

Plague confound thee, who must know my impatience, and the reason for it!

To send a man and horse on purpose; as I did! My imagination chained to the belly of the beast, in order to keep pace with him!—Now he is got to this place; now to that; now to London; now to thee!

Now [a letter given him] whip and spur upon the return. This town just entered, not staying to bait: that village passed by: leaves the wind behind him: in a foaming sweat man and horse.

And in this way did he actually enter Lord M.'s courtyard.

The reverberating pavement brought me down—The letter, Will.! The letter, dog!—The letter, Sirrah!

No letter, Sir!—Then wildly staring round me, fists clenched, and grinning like a maniac, Confound thee for a dog, and him that sent thee without one!—This moment out of my sight, or I'll scatter thy stupid brains through the air. I snatched from his holsters a pistol, while the rascal threw himself from the foaming beast, and ran to avoid the fate which I wished with all my soul thou hadst been within the reach of me to have met with.

But, to be as meek as a lamb to one who has me at his mercy, and can wring and torture my soul as he pleases, *What canst thou mean* to send back my varlet without a letter?—I will send away by day-dawn another fellow upon another beast for what thou hast written; and I charge thee on thy allegiance, that thou dispatch him not back empty-handed.

POSTSCRIPT.

Charlotte, in a whim of delicacy, is displeased that I send the enclosed letter to you—that her hand-writing, forsooth! should go into the hands of a single man!

There's encouragement for thee, Belford! This is a certain sign that thou may'st have her if thou wilt. And yet, till she had given me this unerring demonstration of her glancing towards thee, I could not have thought it. Indeed I have often in pleasantry told her that I would bring such an affair to bear. But I never intended it; because she really is a dainty girl; and thou art such a clumsy fellow in thy person, that I should as soon have wished her a rhinoceros for a husband as thee. But, poor little dears! they must stay till their time's come! They won't have this man, and they won't have that man, from seventeen to twenty-five: but then, afraid, as the saying is, that *God has forgot them*, and finding their bloom departing, they are glad of whom they can get, and verify the fable of the parson and the pears.

LETTER LXXXIII.

MR. BRAND, TO JOHN HARLOWE, ESQ.

[*Enclosed in the preceding.*]

WORTHY SIR, MY VERY GOOD FRIEND AND PATRON,

I ARRIVED in town yesterday, after a tolerably pleasant journey (considering the hot weather and dusty roads). I put up at the Bull and Gate in Holborn, and hastened to Covent-garden. I soon found the house where the unhappy lady lodgeth. And, in the back shop, had a good deal of discourse* with Mrs. Smith, (her landlady,) whom I found to be so *highly prepossessed* in her *favour*, that I saw it would not answer your desires to take my informations *altogether* from her: and being obliged to attend my patron, (who, to my sorrow,

Miserum est aliena vivere quadra,)

I find wanteth much waiting upon, and is *another* sort of a man than he was at college: for, Sir, *inter nos*, *honours change manners*. For the *aforesaid causes*, I thought it would best answer all the ends of the commission with which you honoured me, to engage, in the desired scrutiny, the wife of a *particular friend*, who liveth almost over-against the house where she lodgeth, and who is a gentlewoman of *character* and *sobriety*, a *mother of children*, and one who *knoweth* the *world* well.

To her I applied myself, therefore, and gave her a short history of the case, and desired she would very particu-

* See Letter XXXVIII. of this volume.

larly inquire into the *conduct* of the unhappy young lady; her *present way of life* and *subsistence;* her *visiters*, her *employments*, and such-like: for these, Sir, you know, are the things whereof you wished to be informed.

Accordingly, Sir, I waited upon the gentlewoman aforesaid, this day; and, to *my* very great trouble, (because I know it will be to *your's*, and likewise to all your worthy family's,) I must say, that I do find things look a little more *darkly* than I hoped they would. For, alas! Sir, the gentlewoman's report turneth not out so *favourable* for Miss's reputation, as *I* wished, as *you* wished, and as *every one* of her friends wished. But so it is throughout the world, that *one false step* generally brings on *another;* and peradventure *a worse*, and *a still worse;* till the poor *limed soul* (a very fit epithet of the divine Quarles's!) is quite *entangled*, and (without infinite *mercy*) lost for ever.

It seemeth, Sir, she is, notwithstanding, in a very *ill state of health.* In this, *both* gentlewomen (that is to say, Mrs. Smith, her landlady, and my friend's wife) agree. Yet she goeth often out in a chair, to *prayers* (as it is said). But my friend's wife told me, that nothing is more common in London, than that the frequenting of the church at morning prayers is made the *pretence* and *cover* for *private assignations.* What a sad thing is this! that what was designed for *wholesome nourishment* to the *poor soul*, should be turned into *rank poison!* But as Mr. Daniel de Foe (an ingenious man, though a *dissenter*) observeth (but indeed it is an old proverb; only I think he was the first that put it into verse)

> God never had a house of pray'r,
> But Satan had a chapel there.

Yet to do the lady *justice*, nobody cometh home with her: nor indeed *can* they, because she goeth forward and backward in a *sedan*, or *chair*, (as they call it). But then there is a gentleman of *no good character* (an *intimado* of Mr. Lovelace) who is a *constant* visiter of her, and of the people of the house, whom he *regaleth* and *treateth*, and hath (of consequence) their *high good words*.

I have thereupon taken the trouble (for I love to be *exact* in any *commission* I undertake) to inquire *particularly* about this *gentleman*, as he is called (albeit I hold no man so but by his actions: for, as Juvenal saith,

—Nobilitas sola est, atque unica virtus)

And this I did *before* I would sit down to write to you.

His name is Belford. He hath a paternal estate of upwards of one thousand pounds by the year; and is now in mourning for an uncle who left him very considerably besides. He beareth a very profligate character as to *women*, (for I inquired particularly about *that*,) and is Mr. Lovelace's more especial *privado*, with whom he holdeth a *regular correspondence*; and hath been often seen with Miss (tête à tête) at the *window*—in no *bad way*, indeed: but my friend's wife is of opinion that all is not *as it should be*. And, indeed, it is mighty strange to me, if Miss be so *notable a penitent* (as is represented) and if she have such an *aversion* to Mr. Lovelace, that she will admit his *privado* into *her retirements*, and see *no other company*.

I understand, from Mrs. Smith, that Mr. Hickman was to see her some time ago, from Miss Howe; and I am told, by *another* hand, (you see, Sir, how diligent I have been to execute the *commissions* you gave me,) that he had no *extraordinary opinion* of this Belford at first; though

they were seen together one morning by the opposite neighbour, at *breakfast:* and another time this Belford was observed to *watch* Mr. Hickman's coming from her; so that, as it should seem, he was mighty zealous to *ingratiate* himself with Mr. Hickman; no doubt to engage him to make a *favourable report to Miss Howe* of the *intimacy* he was admitted into by her unhappy friend; who *(as she is very ill)* may *mean no harm* in allowing his visits, (for he, it seemeth, brought to her, or recommended, at least, the doctor and apothecary that attend her: but I think (upon the whole) *it looketh not well.*

I am sorry, Sir, I cannot give you a better account of the young lady's *prudence.* But, what shall we say?

Uvaque conspectâ livorem ducit ab uvâ,

as Juvenal observeth.

One thing I am afraid of; which is, that Miss may be under *necessities;* and that this Belford (who, as Mrs. Smith owns, hath *offered her money*, which she, *at the time*, refused) may find an opportunity to *take advantage* of those *necessities:* and it is well observed by that poet, that

Ægrè formosam poteris servare puellam:
Nunc prece, nunc pretio, forma petita ruit.

And this Belford (who is a *bold man*, and hath, as they say, the *look* of one) may make good that of Horace, (with whose writings you are so well acquainted; nobody better;)

Audax omnia perpeti,
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas.

Forgive me, Sir, for what I am going to write: but if you could prevail upon the rest of your family to join in the scheme which *you*, and her *virtuous sister*, Miss Arabella, and the Archdeacon, and I, once talked of, (which is to persuade the unhappy young lady to go, in some *creditable* manner, to some one of the foreign colonies,) it might not save only her *own credit* and *reputation*, but the *reputation* and *credit* of all her *family*, and a great deal of *vexation* moreover. For it is my humble opinion, that you will hardly (any of you) enjoy yourselves while this (*once* innocent) young lady is in the way of being so frequently heard of by you: and this would put her *out of the way* both of *this Belford* and of *that Lovelace*, and it might, peradventure, prevent as much *evil* as *scandal*.

You will forgive me, Sir, for this my *plainness*. Ovid pleadeth for me,

—— *Adulator nullus amicus erit.*

And I have no view but that of approving myself a *zealous well-wisher* to *all* your worthy family, (whereto I owe a great number of obligations,) and very particularly, Sir,

Your obliged and humble servant,

Wedn. Aug. 9. ELIAS BRAND.

P. S. I shall give you *farther hints* when I come down, (which will be in a few days;) and who my *informants* were; but by *these* you will see, that I have been very assiduous (for the time) in the task you set me upon.

The *length* of my letter you will excuse: for I need not tell you, Sir, what *narrative*, *complex*, and *conversa-*

tion letters (such a one as *mine*) require. Every one to his *talent*. *Letter-writing* is mine. I will be bold to say; and that my *correspondence* was much coveted in the university, on that account, by *tyros*, and even by *sophs*, when I was hardly a *soph* myself. But this I should not have taken upon me to mention, but only in defence of the *length* of my letter; for nobody writeth *shorter* or *pithier*, when the subject requireth *common forms* only—but, in apologizing for my *prolixity*, I am *adding* to the *fault*, (if it were one, which, however, I cannot think it to be, the *subject* considered: but this I have said before in other words:) so, Sir, if you will excuse my *postscript*, I am sure you will not find fault with my *letter*.

One word more as to a matter of *erudition*, which you greatly love to hear me *start* and *dwell upon*. Dr. Lewen once, in *your* presence, (as you, *my good patron*, cannot but remember,) in a *smartish* kind of debate between *him* and *me*, took upon him to censure the *parenthetical* style, as I call it. He was a very learned and judicious man, to be sure, and an ornament to *our function*: but yet I must needs say, that it is a style which I greatly like; and the good Doctor was then past his *youth*, and that time of life, of consequence, when a *fertile imagination*, and a *rich fancy*, pour in ideas so fast upon a writer, that parentheses are often wanted (and that for the sake of *brevity*, as well as *perspicuity*) to save the reader the trouble of reading a passage *more than once*. Every man to his talent, (as I said before.) We are all so apt to set up our *natural biasses* for *general standards*, that I wondered *the less* at the worthy Doctor's *stiffness* on this occasion. He *smiled at me*, you may remember, Sir—

and, whether I was right or not, I am sure I *smiled at him.* And *you*, my *worthy patron*, (as I had the satisfaction to observe,) seemed to be of *my party.* But was it not strange, that the *old gentleman* and *I* should so widely differ, when the *end* with *both* (that is to say, *perspicuity* or *clearness*,) was the same?—But what shall we say?—

Errare est hominis, sed non persistere.

I think I have nothing to add until I have the honour of attending you in *person;* but I am (as above,) &c. &c. &c. E. B.

LETTER LXXXIV.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Wednesday Night, Aug. 30.

It was lucky enough that our two servants met at Hannah's,* which gave them so good an opportunity of exchanging their letters time enough for each to return to his master early in the day.

Thou dost well to boast of thy capacity for managing servants, and to set up for correcting our poets in their characters of this class of people,† when, like a madman, thou canst beat their teeth out, and attempt to shoot them through the head, for not bringing to thee what they had no power to obtain.

* The Windmill, near Slough.

† See Letter LXII. of this volume.

You well observe* that you would have made a thorough-paced lawyer. The whole of the conversation-piece between you and the Colonel affords a convincing proof that there is a black and a white side to every cause: But what must the conscience of a partial whitener of his *own* cause, or blackener of *another's*, tell him, while he is throwing dust in the eyes of his judges, and all the time knows his own guilt?

The Colonel, I see, is far from being a faultless man: but while he sought not to carry his point by breach of faith, he has an excuse which thou hast not. But, with respect to him, and to us all, I can now, with the detestation of some of my own actions, see, that the taking advantage of another person's good opinion of us to injure (perhaps to ruin) that other, is the most ungenerous wickedness that can be committed.

Man acting thus by *man*, we should not be at a loss to give such actions a name: But is it not doubly and trebly aggravated, when such advantage is taken of an unexperienced and innocent young creature, whom we pretend to love above all the women in the world; and when we seal our pretences by the most solemn vows and protestations of inviolable honour that we can invent?

I see that this gentleman is the best match thou ever couldest have had, upon all accounts: his spirit such another impetuous one as thy own; soon taking fire; vindictive; and only differing in this, that the cause he engages in is a just one. But commend me to honest brutal Mowbray, who, before he *knew* the cause, offers his sword in thy behalf against a man who had taken the injured side, and whom he had never seen before.

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* See Letter LXXXII. of this volume.

As soon as I had run through your letters, and the copy of that of the incendiary Brand's, (by the latter of which I saw to what cause a great deal of this last implacableness of the Harlowe family is owing,) I took coach to Smith's, although I had been come from thence but about an hour, and had taken leave of the lady for the night.

I sent up for Mrs. Lovick, and desired her, in the first place, to acquaint the lady (who was busied in her closet,) that I had letters from Berks: in which I was informed, that the interview between Colonel Morden and Mr. Lovelace had ended without ill consequences; that the Colonel intended to write to her very soon, and was interesting himself mean while, in her favour, with her relations; that I hoped that this agreeable news would be means of giving her good rest; and I would wait upon her in the morning, by the time she should return from prayers, with all the particulars.

She sent me word that she should be glad to see me in the morning; and was highly obliged to me for the good news I had sent her up.

I then, in the back shop, read to Mrs. Lovick and to Mrs. Smith the copy of Brand's letter, and asked them if they could guess at the man's informant? They were not at a loss; Mrs. Smith having seen the same fellow Brand who had talked with her, as I mentioned in the former*, come out of a miliner's shop over against them; which milliner, she said, had also lately been very inquisitive about the lady.

I wanted no farther hint; but, bidding them take no notice to the lady of what I had read, I shot over the way, and, asking for the mistress of the house, she came to me.

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* See Letter XXXVIII. of this volume.

Retiring with her, at her invitation, into her parlour, I desired to know if she were acquainted with a young country clergyman of the name of *Brand*. She hesitatingly, seeing me in some emotion, owned that she had some small knowledge of the gentleman. Just then came in her husband, who is, it seems, a petty officer of excise, (and not an ill-behaved man,) who owned a fuller knowledge of him.

I have the copy of a letter, said I, from this Brand, in which he has taken great liberties with my character, and with that of the most unblamable lady in the world, which he grounds upon information that you, Madam, have given him. And then I read to them several passages in his letter, and asked what foundation she had for giving that fellow such impressions of either of us?

They knew not what to answer: but at last said, that he had told them how wickedly the young lady had run away from her parents: what worthy and rich people they were: in what favour *he* stood with them; and that they had employed him to inquire after her behaviour, visiters, &c.

They said, 'That indeed they knew very little of the 'young lady; but that [curse upon their censoriousness!] 'it was but too natural to think that, where a lady had 'given way to a delusion, and taken so wrong a step, she 'would not stop there: that the most sacred places and 'things were but too often made clokes for bad actions; 'that Mr. Brand had been informed (perhaps by some 'enemy of mine) that I was a man of very free prin-'ciples, and an *intimado*, as he calls it, of the man who 'had ruined her. And that their cousin Barker, a man-'teau-maker, who lodged up one pair of stairs,' (and who, at their desire, came down and confirmed what they said,)

'had often, from her window, seen me with the lady in 'her chamber, and both talking very earnestly together; 'and that Mr. Brand, being unable to account for her ad- 'mitting my visits, and knowing I was but a new ac- 'quaintance of her's, and an old one of Mr. Lovelace, 'thought himself obliged to lay these matters before her 'friends.'

This was the sum and substance of their tale. O how I cursed the censoriousness of this plaguy triumvirate! A parson, a milliner, and a mantua-maker! The two latter, not more by *business* led to adorn the persons, than generally by *scandal* to destroy the *reputations*, of those they have a mind to exercise their talents upon!

The two women took great pains to persuade me that they themselves were people of conscience;—of consequence, I told them, too much addicted, I feared, to censure other people who pretended not to their strictness; for that I had ever found censoriousness, narrowness, and uncharitableness, to prevail too much with those who affected to be thought more pious than their neighbours.

They answered, that that was not their case; and that they had since inquired into the lady's character and manner of life, and were very much concerned to think any thing they had said should be made use of against her: and as they heard from Mrs. Smith that she was not likely to live long, they should be sorry she should go out of the world a sufferer by their means, or with an ill opinion of them, though strangers to her. The husband offered to write, if I pleased, to Mr. Brand, in vindication of the lady; and the two women said they should be glad to wait upon her in person, to beg her pardon for any thing she had reason to take amiss from them; because they

were now convinced that there was not such another young lady in the world.

I told them that the least said of the affair to the lady, in her present circumstances, was best. That she was an heavenly creature, and fond of taking all occasions to find excuses for her relations on their implacableness to her: that therefore I should take some notice to her of the uncharitable and weak surmises which gave birth to so vile a scandal: but that I would have him, Mr. Walton, (for that is the husband's name,) write to his acquaintance Brand as soon as possible, as he had offered; and so I left them.

As to what thou sayest of thy charming cousin, let me know if thou hast any meaning in it. I have not the vanity to think myself deserving of such a lady as Miss Montague; and should not therefore care to expose myself to her scorn and to thy derision. But were I assured I might avoid both these, I would soon acquaint thee that I should think no pains nor assiduity too much to obtain a share in the good graces of such a lady.

But I know thee too well to depend upon any thing thou sayest on this subject. Thou lovest to make thy friends the object of ridicule to ladies; and imaginest, from the vanity, (and, in this respect, I will say littleness,) of thine own heart, that thou shinest the brighter for the foil.

Thus didst thou once play off the rough Mowbray with Miss Hatton, till the poor fellow knew not how to go either backward or forward.

LETTER LXXXV.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Thursday, 11 o'clock, Aug. 31.

I AM just come from the lady, whom I left cheerful and serene.

She thanked me for my communication of the preceding night. I read to her such parts of your letters as I *could* read to her; and I thought it was a good test to distinguish the froth and whipt-syllabub in them from the cream, in what one *could* and could *not* read to a woman of so fine a mind; since four parts out of six of thy letters, which I thought entertaining as I read them to myself, appeared to me, when I should have read them to her, most abominable stuff, and gave me a very contemptible idea of thy talents, and of my own judgment.

She was far from rejoicing, as I had done, at the disappointment her letter gave you when explained.

She said, she meant only an innocent allegory, which might carry instruction and warning to you, when the meaning was taken, as well as answer her own hopes for the time. It was run off in a hurry. She was afraid it was not quite right in *her*. But hoped the end would excuse (if it could not justify) the means. And then she again expressed a good deal of apprehension lest you should still take it into your head to molest her, when her time, she said, was so short, that she wanted every moment of it; repeating what she had once said before, that, when she wrote, she was so ill that she believed she should not have lived till now: if she had thought she should, she must have studied for an expedient that would

have better answered her intentions. Hinting at a removal out of the knowledge of us both.

But she was much pleased that the conference between you and Colonel Morden, after two or three such violent sallies, as I acquainted her you had had between you, ended so amicably; and said she must absolutely depend upon the promise I had given her to use my utmost endeavours to prevent farther mischief on her account.

She was pleased with the justice you did her character to her cousin.

She was glad to hear that he had so kind an opinion of her, and that he would write to her.

I was under an unnecessary concern, how to break to her that I had the copy of Brand's vile letter: *unnecessary*, I say; for she took it just as you thought she would, as an excuse she wished to have for the implacableness of her friends; and begged I would let her read it herself; for, said she, the contents cannot disturb me, be they what they will.

I gave it to her, and she read it to herself; a tear now and then being ready to start, and a sigh sometimes interposing.

She gave me back the letter with great and surprising calmness, considering the subject.

There was a time, said she, and that not long since, when such a letter as this would have greatly pained me. But I hope I have now got above all these things: and I can refer to your kind offices, and to those of Miss Howe, the justice that will be done to my memory among my friends. There is a good and a bad light in which every thing that befalls us may be taken. If the human mind will busy itself to make the worst of every disagreeable occurrence, it will never want woe. This letter, affect-

ing as the subject of it is to my reputation, gives me more pleasure than pain, because I can gather from it, that had not my friends been prepossessed by misinformed or rash and officious persons, who are always at hand to flatter or soothe the passions of the affluent, they could not have been so immovably determined against me. But now they are sufficiently cleared from every imputation of unforgivingness; for, while I appeared to them in the character of a vile hypocrite, pretending to true penitence, yet giving up myself to profligate courses, how could I expect either their pardon or blessing?

But, Madam, said I, you'll see by the date of this letter, *August* 9, that their severity, *previous* to that, cannot be excused by it.

It imports me much, replied she, on account of my present wishes, as to the office you are so kind to undertake, that you should not think harshly of my friends. I must own to you, that I have been apt sometimes myself to think them not only severe but cruel. Suffering minds will be partial to their own cause and merits. Knowing their own hearts, if sincere, they are apt to murmur when harshly treated: But, if they are not *believed* to be innocent, by persons who have a right to decide upon their conduct according to their own judgments, how can it be helped? Besides, Sir, how do you know, that there are not about my friends as well-meaning misrepresenters as Mr. Brand really seems to be? But, be this as it will, there is no doubt that there are and have been multitudes of persons, as innocent as myself, who have suffered upon surmises as little probable as those on which Mr. Brand founds his judgment. Your intimacy, Sir, with Mr. Lovelace, and (may I say?) a character which, it seems, you have been less solicitous formerly

to justify than perhaps you will be for the future, and your frequent visits to me may well be thought to be questionable circumstances in my conduct.

I could only admire her in silence.

But you see, Sir, proceeded she, how necessary it is for young people of our sex to be careful of our company. And how much, at the same time, it behoves young persons of your's to be chary of their own reputation, were it only for the sake of such of our's as they may mean honourably by, and who otherwise may suffer in their good names for being seen in their company.

As to Mr. Brand, continued she, he is to be pitied; and let me enjoin you, Mr. Belford, not to take up any resentments against him which may be detrimental either to his person or his fortunes. Let his function and his good meaning plead for him. He will have concern enough, when he finds every body, whose displeasure I now labour under, acquitting my memory of perverse guilt, and joining in a general pity for me.

This, Lovelace, is the woman whose life thou hast curtailed in the blossom of it!—How many opportunities must thou have had of admiring her inestimable worth, yet couldst have thy senses so much absorbed in the WOMAN, in her charming person, as to be blind to the ANGEL, that shines out in such full glory in her mind! Indeed, I have ever thought myself, when blest with her conversation, in the company of a real angel: and I am sure it would be impossible for me, were she to be as beautiful, and as crimsoned over with health, as I have seen her, to have the least thought of sex, when I heard her talk.

Thursday, Three o'clock, Aug. 31.

ON my re-visit to the lady, I found her almost as much

a sufferer from joy as she had sometimes been from grief; for she had just received a very kind letter from her cousin Morden; which she was so good as to communicate to me. As she had already begun to answer it, I begged leave to attend her in the evening, that I might not interrupt her in it.

The letter is a very tender one * * * *

[Here Mr. Belford gives the substance of it upon his memory; but that is omitted; as the letter is given at length (see the next letter.) And then adds:]

But, alas! all will be now too late. For the decree is certainly gone out—the world is unworthy of her.

LETTER LXXXVI.

COLONEL MORDEN, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Tuesday, Aug. 29.

I SHOULD not, my dearest Cousin, have been a fortnight in England, without either doing myself the honour of waiting upon you in person, or of writing to you; if I had not been busying myself almost all the time in your service, in hopes of making my visit or letter still more acceptable to you—acceptable as I have reason to presume either will be from the unquestionable love I ever bore you, and from the esteem you always honoured me with.

Little did I think that so many days would have been required to effect my well-intended purpose, where there used to be a love so ardent on one side, and where there

still is, as I am thoroughly convinced, the most exalted merit on the other!

I was yesterday with Mr. Lovelace and Lord M. I need not tell *you*, it seems, how very desirous the whole family and all the relations of that nobleman are of the honour of an alliance with you; nor how exceedingly earnest the ungrateful man is to make you all the reparation in his power.

I think, my dear Cousin, that you cannot now do better than to give him the honour of your hand. He says such just and great things of your virtue, and so heartily condemns himself, that I think there is honourable room for you to forgive him: and the more room, as it seems you are determined against a legal prosecution.

Your effectual forgiveness of Mr. Lovelace, it is evident to me, will accelerate a general reconciliation: for, at present, my other cousins cannot persuade themselves that he is in earnest to do you justice; or that you would refuse him, if you believed he was.

But, my dear Cousin, there may possibly be something in this affair, to which I may be a stranger. If there be, and you will acquaint me with it, all that a *naturally*-warm heart can do in your behalf shall be done.

I hope I shall he able, in my next visits to my several cousins, to set all right with them. Haughty spirits, when convinced that they have carried resentments too high, want but a good excuse to condescend: and parents must *always* love the child they *once* loved.

But if I find them inflexible, I will set out, and attend you without delay; for I long to see you, after so many years' absence.

Mean while, I beg the favour of a few lines, to know if you have reason to doubt Mr. Lovelace's sincerity.

For my part, I can have none, if I am to judge from the conversation that passed between us yesterday, in presence of Lord M.

You will be pleased to direct for me at your uncle Antony's.

Permit me, my dearest Cousin, till I can procure a happy reconciliation between you and your father, and brother, and uncles, to supply the place to you of all those near relations, as well as that of

Your affectionate kinsman, and humble servant,

WM. MORDEN.

LETTER LXXXVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO WM. MORDEN, ESQ.

Thursday, Aug. 31.

I MOST heartily congratulate you, dear Sir, on your return to your native country.

I heard with much pleasure that you were come; but I was both afraid and ashamed, till you encouraged me by a first notice, to address myself to you.

How consoling is it to my wounded heart to find that you have not been carried away by that tide of resentment and displeasure with which I have been so unhappily overwhelmed—but that, while my still nearer relations have not thought fit to examine into the truth of vile reports raised against me, you have informed yourself of my innocence, and generously *credited* the information!

I have not the least reason to doubt Mr. Lovelace's sincerity in his offers of marriage; nor that all his rela-

tions are heartily desirous of ranking me among them. I have had noble instances of their esteem for me, on their apprehending that my father's displeasure must have subjected me to difficulties; and this, after I had absolutely refused *their* pressing solicitations in their kinsman's favour as well as *his own*.

Nor think me, my dear Cousin, blamable for refusing him. I had given Mr. Lovelace no reason to think me a weak creature. If I *had*, a man of his character might have thought himself warranted to endeavour to take ungenerous advantage of the weakness he had been able to inspire. The consciousness of *my own* weakness (in that case) might have brought me to a composition with *his* wickedness.

I can indeed forgive him. But that is, because I think his crimes have set me above him. Can I be above the man, Sir, to whom I shall give my hand and my vows, and with them a sanction to the most premeditated baseness? No, Sir, let me say, that your cousin Clarissa, were she likely to live many years, and *that* (if she married not this man) in penury or want, despised and forsaken by all her friends, puts not so high a value upon the conveniencies of life, nor upon life itself, as to seek to re-obtain the one, or to preserve the other, by giving *such* a sanction: a sanction, which *(were she to perform her duty,)* would reward the violator.

Nor is it so much from pride as from principle that I say this. What, Sir! when virtue, when chastity, is the crown of a woman, and particularly of a wife, shall your cousin stoop to marry the man who could not form an attempt upon *her's* but upon a presumption that she was capable of receiving his offered hand when he had found himself mistaken in the vile opinion he had conceived of

her? Hitherto he has not had reason to think me weak. Nor will I give an instance so flagrant, that weak I am in a point in which it would be criminal to be *found* weak.

One day, Sir, you will perhaps know all my story. But, whenever it is known, I beg that the author of my calamities may not be vindictively sought after. He could not have been the author of them, but for a strange concurrence of unhappy causes. As the law will not be able to reach him when I am gone, the apprehension of any other sort of vengeance terrifies me; since, in such a case, should my friends be *safe*, what honour would his death bring to my memory?—If any of them should come to misfortune, how would my fault be aggravated!

God long preserve you, my dearest Cousin, and bless you but in *proportion* to the consolation you have given me, in letting me know that you still love me; and that I have one near and dear relation who can pity and forgive me; (and then you will be *greatly* blessed;) is the prayer of

Your ever grateful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

[*In answer to his Letters* LXV. LXXIX. *of this vol.*]

Thursday, Aug. 31.

CANNOT but own that I am cut to the heart by *this* Miss Harlowe's interpretation of her letter. She ought

never to be forgiven. *She*, a meek person, and a penitent, and innocent, and pious, and I know not what, who can deceive with a foot in the grave!—

'Tis evident, that she sat down to write this letter with a design to mislead and deceive. And if she be capable of that, at such a crisis, she has as much need of *Heaven's* forgiveness, as I have of *her's:* and, with all her cant of *charity* and *charity*, if she be not more sure of it than I am of her *real pardon*, and if she take the thing in the light she ought to take it in, she will have a few darker moments yet to come than she seems to expect.

Lord M. himself, who is not one of those (to speak in his own phrase) *who can penetrate a millstone*, sees the deceit, and thinks it unworthy of her; though my cousins Montague vindicate her. And no wonder; this cursed partial sex [I hate 'em all—by my soul, I hate 'em all!] will never allow any thing against an individual of it, where our's is concerned. And why? Because, if they censure deceit in another, they must condemn their own hearts.

She is to send me a letter after she is in Heaven, is she? The devil take such *allegories*, and the devil take thee for calling this absurdity an *innocent* artifice!

I insist upon it, that if a woman of her character, at such a critical time, is to be justified in such a deception, a man in full health and vigour of body and mind, as I am, may be excused for all his stratagems and attempts against her. And, thank my stars, I can now sit me down with a quiet conscience on that score. By my soul, I can, Jack. Nor has any body, who can acquit *her*, a right to blame *me*. But with some, indeed, every thing *she* does must be good, every thing *I* do must be bad—And why? Because she has always taken care to coax the

stupid misjudging world, like a *woman:* while I have constantly defied and despised its censures, like a *man.*

But, notwithstanding all, you may let her know from me that I will *not* molest her, since my visits would be so shocking to her: and I hope she will take this into her consideration as a piece of generosity which she could hardly expect after the deception she has put upon me. And let her farther know, that if there be any thing in my power, that will contribute either to her ease or honour, I will obey her, at the very first intimation, however disgraceful or detrimental to myself. All this, to make her unapprehensive, and that she may have nothing to pull her back.

If her cursed relations could be brought as cheerfully to perform *their* parts, I'd answer life for life for her recovery.

But who, that has so many ludicrous images raised in his mind by thy awkward penitence, can forbear laughing at thee? Spare, I beseech thee, dear Belford, for the future, all thine own aspirations, if thou wouldst not dishonour those of an angel indeed.

When I came to that passage, where thou sayst that thou considerest her* as one sent from Heaven to draw thee after her—for the heart of me I could not for an hour put thee out of my head, in the attitude of dame Elizabeth Carteret, on her monument in Westminster Abbey. If thou never observedst it, go thither on purpose: and there wilt thou see this dame in effigy, with uplifted head and hand, the latter taken hold of by a cupid every inch of stone, one clumsy foot lifted up also, aiming, as the sculptor designed it, to ascend; but so executed,

* See Letter LXXIX. of this volume.

as would rather make one imagine that the figure (without shoe or stocking, as it is, though the rest of the body is robed) was looking up to its corn-cutter : the other riveted to its native earth, bemired, like thee (*immersed* thou callest it) beyond the possibility of unsticking itself. Both figures, thou wilt find, seem to be in a contention, the bigger, whether it should pull down the lesser about its ears—the lesser (a chubby fat little varlet, of a fourth part of the other's bigness, with wings not much larger than those of a butterfly) whether it should raise the larger to a Heaven it points to, hardly big enough to contain the great toes of either.

Thou wilt say, perhaps, that the dame's figure in *stone* may do credit, in the comparison, to thine, both in grain and shape, *wooden* as thou art all over : but that the lady, who, in every thing but in the trick she has played me so lately, is truly an angel, is but sorrily represented by the fat-flanked cupid. This I allow thee. But yet there is enough in thy aspirations to strike my mind with a resemblance of thee and the lady to the figures on the wretched monument ; for thou oughtest to remember, that, prepared as she may be to mount to her native skies, it is impossible for her to draw after her a heavy fellow who has so much to repent of as thou hast.

But now, to be serious once more, let me tell you, Belford, that, if the lady be really so ill as you write she is, it will become you [*no Roman style here!*] in a case so very affecting, to be a little less pointed and sarcastic in your reflections. For, upon my soul, the matter begins to grate me most confoundedly.

I am now so impatient to hear oftener of her, that I take the hint accidentally given me by our two fellows meeting at Slough, and resolve to go to our friend Dole-

man's at Uxbridge; whose wife and sister, as well as he, have so frequently pressed me to give them my company for a week or two. There shall I be within two hours ride, if any thing should happen to induce her to see me: for it will well become her piety, and avowed charity, should the worst happen, [the Lord of Heaven and Earth, however, avert that worst!] to give me that pardon from her *lips*, which she has not denied to me by *pen and ink*. And as she wishes my reformation, she knows not what good effects such an interview may have upon me.

I shall accordingly be at Doleman's to-morrow morning, by eleven at farthest. My fellow will find me there at his return from you (with a letter, I hope). I shall have Joel with me likewise, that I may send the oftener, as matters fall out. Were I to be *still nearer*, or in town, it would be impossible to withhold myself from seeing her.

But, if the worst happen!—as, by your continual knelling, I know not what to think of it!—[Yet, once more, Heaven avert that worst!—How natural it is to pray, when one cannot help one's self!]—THEN say not, in so many dreadful words, what the event is—Only, that you advise me to take a trip to Paris—And that will stab me to the heart.

I so well approve of your generosity to poor Belton's sister, that I have made Mowbray give up his legacy, as I do mine, towards her India bonds. When I come to town, Tourville shall do the like; and we will buy each a ring to wear in memory of the honest fellow, with our own money, that we may perform *his* will, as well as our *own*.

My fellow rides the rest of the night. I charge you, Jack, if you would save his life, that you send him not back empty-handed.

LETTER LXXXIX.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Tuesday Night, Aug. 30.

WHEN I concluded my last, I hoped that my next attendance upon this *surprising* lady would furnish me with some particulars as agreeable as now could be hoped for from the declining way she is in, by reason of the welcome letter she had received from her cousin Morden. But it proved quite otherwise to *me*, though not to *herself*; for I think I was never more shocked in my life than on the occasion I shall mention presently.

When I attended her about seven in the evening, she told me that she found herself in a very petulant way after I had left her. Strange, said she, that the pleasure I received from my cousin's letter should have such an effect upon me? But I could not help giving way to a *comparative* humour, as I may call it, and to think it very hard that my nearer relations did not take the methods which my cousin Morden kindly took, by inquiring into my merit or demerit, and giving my cause a fair audit before they proceeded to condemnation.

She had hardly said this, when she started, and a blush overspread her sweet face, on hearing, as I also did, a sort of lumbering noise upon the stairs, as if a large trunk

were bringing up between two people: and, looking upon me with an eye of concern, Blunderers! said she, they have brought in *something* two hours before the time.—Don't be surprised, Sir—it is all to save *you* trouble.

Before I could speak, in came Mrs. Smith: O Madam, said she, what have you done?—Mrs. Lovick, entering, made the same exclamation. Lord have mercy upon me, Madam! cried I, what have you done?—For, she stepping at the instant to the door, the women told me it was a coffin.—O Lovelace! that thou hadst been there at the moment!—Thou, the causer of all these shocking scenes! Surely thou couldst not have been less affected than I, who have no guilt, as to *her*, to answer for.

With an intrepidity of a piece with the preparation, having directed them to carry it into her bed-chamber, she returned to us: they were not to have brought it in till after dark, said she—Pray, excuse me, Mr. Belford: and don't you, Mrs. Lovick, be concerned: nor you, Mrs. Smith.—Why should you? There is nothing more in it than the unusualness of the thing. Why may we not be as reasonably shocked at going to the church where are the monuments of our ancestors, with whose dust we even *hope* our dust shall be one day mingled, as to be moved at such a sight as this?

We all remaining silent, the women having their aprons at their eyes, Why this concern for nothing at all? said she. If I am to be blamed for any thing, it is for showing too much solicitude, as it may be thought, for this earthly part. I love to do every thing for myself that I can do. I ever did. Every other material point is so far done, and taken care of, that I have had *leisure* for things of lesser moment. Minutenesses may be observed, where greater

articles are not neglected for them. I might have had this to order, perhaps, when less fit to order it. I have no mother, no sister, no Mrs. Norton, no Miss Howe, near me. Some of you must have seen *this* in a few days, if not now; perhaps have had the friendly trouble of directing it. And what is the difference of a few days to *you*, when *I* am gratified rather than discomposed by it? I shall not die the sooner for such a preparation. Should not every body that has any thing to bequeath make their will? And who, that makes a will, should be afraid of a coffin?—My dear friends [to the women] I have considered these things; do not, with such an object before you as you have had in *me* for weeks, give me reason to think you have not.

How reasonable was all this!—It showed, indeed, that she herself had well considered it. But yet we could not help being shocked at the thoughts of the coffin thus brought in; the lovely person before our eyes who is, in all likelihood, so soon to fill it.

We were all silent still, the women in grief, I in a manner stunned. She would not ask *me*, she said; but would be glad, since it had thus earlier than she had intended been brought in, that her two good friends would walk in and look upon it. They would be less shocked when it was made more familiar to their eye: don't you lead back, said she, a starting steed to the object he is apt to start at, in order to familiarize him to it, and cure his starting? The same reason will hold in this case. Come, my good friends, I will lead you in.

I took my leave; telling her she had done wrong, very wrong; and ought not, by any means, to have such an object before her.

The women followed her in.—'Tis a strange sex! No-

thing is too shocking for them to look upon, or see acted, that has but novelty and curiosity in it.

Down I posted; got a chair; and was carried home, extremely shocked and discomposed: yet, weighing the lady's arguments, I know not why I was so affected—except, as she said, at the unusualness of the thing.

While I waited for a chair, Mrs. Smith came down, and told me that there were devices and inscriptions upon the lid. Lord bless me! is a coffin a proper subject to display fancy upon?—But these great minds cannot avoid doing extraordinary things!

LETTER XC.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday Morn, Sept. 1.

It is surprising, that I, a *man*, should be so much affected as I was, at such an object as is the subject of my former letter; who also, in my late uncle's case, and poor Belton's had the like before me, and the directing of it: when she, a *woman*, of so weak and tender a frame, who was to fill it (so soon perhaps to fill it!) could give orders about it, and draw out the devices upon it, and explain them with so little concern as the women tell me she did to them last night after I was gone.

I really was ill, and restless all night. Thou wert the subject of my execration, as she of my admiration, all the time I was quite awake: and, when I dozed, I dreamt of nothing but of flying hour-glasses, deaths-heads, spades,

mattocks, and eternity; the hint of her devices (as given me by Mrs. Smith) running in my head.

However, not being able to keep away from Smith's, I went thither about seven. The lady was just gone out: she had slept better, I found, than I, though her solemn repository was under her window, not far from her bedside.

I was prevailed upon by Mrs. Smith and her nurse Shelburne (Mrs. Lovick being abroad with her) to go up and look at the devices. Mrs. Lovick has since shown me a copy of the draught by which all was ordered; and I will give thee a sketch of the symbols.

The principal device, neatly etched on a plate of white metal, is a crowned serpent, with its tail in its mouth, forming a ring, the emblem of eternity: and in the circle made by it is this inscription:

CLARISSA HARLOWE.
April x.
[Then the year.]
ÆTAT. XIX.

For ornaments: at top, an hour-glass, winged. At bottom, an urn.

Under the hour-glass, on another plate, this inscription:

HERE the wicked cease from troubling: and HERE the weary be at rest. Job. iii. 17.

Over the urn, near the bottom:

Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath rewarded thee: And why? Thou hast delivered my soul from death; mine eyes from tears; and my feet from falling. Ps. cxvi. 7, 8.

Over this is the head of a white lily snapt short off, and just falling from the stalk; and this inscription over that, between the principal plate and the lily:

> The days of man are but as grass. For he flourisheth as a flower of the field: for, as soon as the wind goeth over it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. Ps. ciii. 15, 16.

She excused herself to the women, on the score of her youth, and being used to draw for her needleworks, for having shown more fancy than would perhaps be thought suitable on so solemn an occasion.

The date, April 10, she accounted for, as not being able to tell what her *closing-day* would be; and as that was the fatal day of her leaving her father's house.

She discharged the undertaker's bill after I went away, with as much cheerfulness as she could ever have paid for the clothes she sold to purchase this her *palace*: for such she called it; reflecting upon herself for the expensiveness of it, saying, that they might observe in *her*, that pride left not poor mortals to the last: but indeed she did not know but her father would permit it, *when furnished*, to be carried down to be deposited with her ancestors; and, in that case, she ought not to discredit those ancestors in her *appearance amongst them*.

It is covered with fine black cloth, and lined with white sattin; soon, she said, to be tarnished by viler earth than any it could be covered by.

The burial-dress was brought home with it. The women had curiosity enough, I suppose, to see her open that, if she did open it.—And, perhaps, thou wouldst have been glad to have been present to have admired it too!—

Mrs. Lovick said, she took the liberty to blame her; and wished the removal of such an object—from her *bed-*

chamber, at least: and was so affected with the noble answer she made upon it, that she entered it down the moment she left her.

'To persons in health, said she, this sight may be 'shocking; and the preparation, and my unconcernedness 'in it, may appear affected: but to me, who have had so 'gradual a weaning-time from the world, and so much 'reason not to love it, I must say, I dwell on, I indulge, '(and, strictly speaking, I enjoy,) the thoughts of death. 'For, believe me,' [looking stedfastly at the awful receptacle,] 'believe what at this instant I feel to be most 'true, That there is such a vast superiority of weight and 'importance in the thought of death, and its hoped-for 'happy consequences, that it in a manner annihilates all 'other considerations and concerns. Believe me, my 'good friends, it does what nothing else can do: it teaches 'me, by strengthening in me the force of the divinest 'example, to forgive the injuries I have received; and 'shuts out the remembrance of past evils from my soul.'

And now let me ask thee, Lovelace, Dost thou think that, when the time shall come that thou shalt be obliged to launch into the boundless ocean of eternity, thou wilt be able (any more than poor Belton) to act thy part with such true heroism, as this sweet and tender blossom of a woman has manifested, and continues to manifest!

Oh! no! it cannot be!—And why can't it be?—The reason is evident: she has no *wilful* errors to look back upon with self-reproach—and her mind is strengthened by the consolations which flow from that *religious rectitude* which has been the guide of all her actions; and which has taught her rather to choose to be a sufferer than an aggressor!

This was the support of the divine Socrates, as thou

hast read. When led to execution, his wife lamenting that he should suffer being innocent, Thou fool, said he, wouldst thou wish me to be guilty !

LETTER XCI.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Friday, Sept. 1.

How astonishing, in the midst of such affecting scenes, is thy mirth on what thou callest *my own aspirations !* Never, surely, was there such another man in this world, thy talents and thy levity taken together !—Surely, what I shall send thee with this will affect thee. If not, nothing can, till *thy own hour* come : and heavy will then thy reflections be !

I am glad, however, that thou enablest me to assure the lady that thou wilt no more molest her ; that is to say, in other words, that, after having ruined her fortunes, and all her worldly prospects, thou wilt be so gracious, as to let her lie down and die in peace.

Thy giving up to poor Belton's sister the little legacy, and thy undertaking to make Mowbray and Tourville follow thy example, are, I must say to thy honour, of a piece with thy generosity to thy Rose-bud and her Johnny ; and to a number of other good actions in pecuniary matters : although thy Rosebud's is, I believe, the only instance, where a pretty woman was concerned, of such a disinterested bounty.

Upon my faith, Lovelace, I love to praise thee ; and often and often, as thou knowest, have I *studied* for oc-

casions to do it: insomuch that when, for the life of me, I could not think of any thing done by thee that deserved praise, I have taken pains to applaud the not ungraceful manner in which thou hast performed actions that merited the gallows.

Now thou art so near, I will dispatch *my* servant to thee, if occasion requires. But, I fear, I shall soon give thee the news thou art apprehensive of. For I am just now sent for by Mrs. Smith; who has ordered the messenger to tell me, that she knew not if the lady will be alive when I come.

Friday, Sept. 1, Two o'clock, at Smith's.

I COULD not close my letter in such an uncertainty as must have added to your impatience. For you have, on several occasions, convinced me, that the suspense you love to *give* would be the greatest torment to you that you could *receive*. A common case with all aggressive and violent spirits, I believe. I will just mention then (your servant waiting here till I have written) that the lady has had two very severe fits: in the last of which whilst she lay, they sent to the doctor and Mr. Goddard, who both advised that a messenger should be dispatched for me, as her executor; being doubtful whether, if she had a third, it would not carry her off.

She was tolerably recovered by the time I came; and the doctor made her promise before me, that, while she was so weak, she would not attempt any more to go abroad; for, by Mrs. Lovick's description, who attended her, the shortness of her breath, her extreme weakness, and the fervour of her devotions when at church, were contraries, which, pulling different ways (the soul aspiring, the body sinking) tore her tender frame in pieces.

So much for the present. I shall detain Will. no longer than just to beg that you will send me back this packet and the last. Your memory is so good, that once reading is all you ever give, or need to give, to any thing. And who but ourselves can make out our characters, were you inclined to let any body see what passes between us? If I cannot be obliged, I shall be tempted to withhold what I write, till I have time to take a copy of it*.

A letter from Miss Howe is just now brought by a particular messenger, who says he must carry back a few lines in return. But, as the lady is just retired to lie down, the man is to call again by-and-by.

LETTER XCII.

MR. LOVELACE, TO JOHN BELFORD, ESQ.

Uxbridge, Sept. 1. Twelve o'clock at Night.

I SEND you the papers with this. You must account to me honestly and fairly, when I see you, for the earnestness with which you write for them. And then also will we talk about the contents of your last dispatch, and about some of your severe and unfriendly reflections.

Mean time, whatever thou dost, don't let the wonderful creature leave us! Set before her the sin of her preparation, as if she thought she could depart when she pleased. She'll persuade herself, at this rate, that she

* It may not be amiss to observe, that Mr Belford's solicitude to get back his letters was owing to his desire of fulfilling the lady's wishes that he would furnish Miss Howe with materials to vindicate her memory.

has nothing to do, when all is ready, but to lie down, and go to sleep: and such a lively fancy as her's will make a reality of a jest at any time.

A *jest* I call all that has passed between her and me; a mere jest to die for—For has not her triumph over me, from first to last, been infinitely greater than her sufferings from me?

Would the sacred regard I have for her purity, even for her *personal* as well as *intellectual* purity, permit, I could prove this as clear as the sun. Tell, therefore, the dear creature that she must not be wicked in her piety. There is a *too much*, as well as *too little*, even in righteousness. Perhaps she does not think of that.—Oh! that she would have permitted my attendance, as obligingly as she does of thine!—The dear soul used to love humour. I remember the time that she knew how to smile at a piece of *apropos* humour. And, let me tell thee, a smile upon the lips, or a sparkling in the eye, must have had its correspondent cheerfulness in a heart so sincere as her's.

Tell the doctor I will make over all my possessions, and all my reversions, to him, if he will but prolong her life for one twelvemonth to come. But for one twelvemonth, Jack!—He will lose all his reputation with me, and I shall treat him as Belton did his doctor, if he cannot do this for me, on so young a subject. But *nineteen*, Belford!—*nineteen* cannot so soon die of grief, if the doctor deserve that title; and so blooming and so fine a constitution as she had but three or four months ago!

But what need the doctor to ask her leave to write to her friends? Could he not have done it without letting her know any thing of the matter? That was one of the likeliest means that could be thought of to bring some of them about her, since she is so desirous to see them. At

least it would have induced them to send up her favourite Norton. But these plaguy solemn fellows are great traders in parade. They'll cram down your throat their poisonous drugs by wholesale, without asking you a question; and have the assurance to *own* it to be *prescribing:* but, when they are to do good, they are to require your consent.

How the dear creature's character rises in every line of thy letters! But it is owing to the uncommon occasions she has met with that she blazes out upon us with such a meridian lustre. How, but for those occasions, could her noble sentiments, her prudent consideration, her forgiving spirit, her exalted benevolence, and her equanimity in view of the most shocking prospects (which set her in a light so superior to all her sex, and even to the philosophers of antiquity) have been manifested?

I know thou wilt think I am going to claim some merit to myself, for having given her such opportunities of signalizing her virtues. But I am not; for, if I did, I must share that merit with her implacable relations, who would justly be entitled to *two-thirds* of it, at least: and my soul disdains a partnership in any thing with such a family.

But this I mention as an answer to thy reproaches, that I could be so little edified by perfections, to which, thou supposest, I was for so long together daily and hourly a personal witness—when, admirable as she was in all she said, and in all she did, occasion had not at that time ripened, and called forth, those amazing perfections which now astonish and confound me.

Hence it is that I admire her more than ever; and that my love for her is less *personal*, as I may say, more *intellectual*, than ever I thought it could be to woman.

Hence also it is that I am confident (would it please the Fates to spare her, and make her mine) I could love her

with a purity that would draw on *my own* FUTURE, as well as ensure *her* TEMPORAL, happiness.—And hence, by necessary consequence, shall I be the most miserable of all men, if I am deprived of her.

Thou severely reflectest upon me for my levity: the Abbey instance in thine eye, I suppose. And I will be ingenuous enough to own, that as thou seest not my heart, there may be passages, in every one of my letters, which (the melancholy occasion considered) deserve thy most pointed rebukes. But faith, Jack, thou art such a tragi-comical mortal, with thy leaden aspirations at one time, and thy flying hour-glasses and dreaming terrors at another, that, as Prior says, *What serious is, thou turn'st to farce;* and it is impossible to keep within the bounds of decorum or gravity when one reads what thou writest.

But to restrain myself (for my constitutional gayety was ready to run away with me again) I will repeat, I must *ever* repeat, that I am most egregiously affected with the circumstances of the case: and, were this paragon actually to quit the world, should never enjoy myself one hour together, though I were to live to the age of Methusalem.

Indeed it is to this *deep concern*, that my *levity* is owing: for I struggle and struggle, and try to buffet down my cruel reflections as they rise; and when I cannot, I am forced, as I have often said, to try to make myself laugh, that I may not cry; for one or other I must do: and is it not philosophy carried to the highest pitch, for a man to conquer such tumults of soul as I am sometimes agitated by, and, in the very height of the storm, to be able to quaver out an horse-laugh?

Your Seneca's, your Epictetus's, and the rest of your stoical tribe, with all their apathy nonsense, could not come up to this. They could forbear wry faces: bodily

pains they could well enough *seem* to support; and that was all: but the pangs of their own smitten-down souls they could not *laugh* over, though they could at the follies of others. They read grave lectures; but they *were* grave. This high point of philosophy, to laugh and be merry in the midst of the most soul-harrowing woes, when the heart-strings are just bursting asunder, was reserved for thy Lovelace.

There is something owing to constitution, I own; and that this is the laughing-time of my life. For what a woe must that be, which for an hour together can mortify a man of six or seven and twenty, in high blood and spirits, of a naturally gay disposition, who can sing, dance, and scribble, and take and give delight in them all?—But then my grief, as my joy, is sharper-pointed than most other men's; and, like what Dolly Welby once told me, describing the parturient throes, if there were not lucid intervals, if they did not come and go, there would be no bearing them.

After all, as I am so little distant from the dear creature, and as she is so very ill, I think I cannot excuse myself from making her *one* visit. Nevertheless, if I thought her so near—[what word shall I use, that my soul is not shocked at!] and that she would be *too much discomposed* by a visit, I would not think of it.—Yet how can I bear the recollection, that, when she last went from me (her innocence so triumphant over my premeditated guilt, as was enough to reconcile her to life, and to set her above the sense of injuries so nobly sustained, that) she should then depart with an incurable fracture in her heart; and that *that* should be the last time I should ever see her!—How, how, can I bear this reflection!

O Jack! how my conscience, that gives edge even to

thy blunt reflections, tears me!—Even this moment would I give the world to push the cruel reproacher from me by one ray of my usual gayety!—Sick of myself!—sick of the remembrance of my vile plots; and of my *light*, my momentary ecstasy [villanous burglar, felon, thief, that I was!] which has brought on me such *durable* and such *heavy* remorse! what would I give that I had not been guilty of such barbarous and ungrateful perfidy to the most excellent of God's creatures!

I would end, methinks, with one sprightlier line!—but it will not be.—Let me tell thee then, and rejoice at it if thou wilt, that I am

Inexpressibly miserable!

LETTER XCIII.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Sat. Morning, Sept. 2.

I HAVE some little pleasure given me by thine, just now brought me. I see now that thou hast a little humanity left. Would to Heaven, for the dear lady's sake, as well as for thy own, that thou hadst rummaged it up from all the dark forgotten corners of thy soul a little sooner!

The lady is alive, and serene, and calm, and has all her noble intellects clear and strong: but *nineteen* will not however save her. She says she will now content herself with her closet duties, and the visits of the parish-minister; and will not attempt to go out. Nor, indeed, will she, I am afraid, ever walk up or down a pair of stairs again.

I am sorry at my soul to have this to say: but it would be a folly to flatter thee.

As to thy seeing her, I believe the least hint of that sort, now, would cut off some hours of her life.

What has contributed to her serenity, it seems, is, that taking the alarm her fits gave her, she has entirely finished, and signed and sealed, her last will: which she had deferred till this time, in hopes, as she said, of some good news from Harlowe-place; which would have induced her to alter some passages in it.

Miss Howe's letter was not given her till four in the afternoon, yesterday; at which time the messenger returned for an answer. She admitted him into her presence in the dining-room, ill as she then was, and she would have written a few lines, as desired by Miss Howe; but, not being able to hold a pen, she bid the messenger tell her that she hoped to be well enough to write a long letter by the next day's post; and would not now detain him.

Saturday, Six in the Afternoon.

I CALLED just now, and found the lady writing to Miss Howe. She made me a melancholy compliment, that she showed me not Miss Howe's letter, because I should soon have that and all her papers before me. But she told me that Miss Howe had very considerably obviated to Colonel Morden several things which might have occasioned misapprehensions between him and me; and had likewise put a lighter construction, for the sake of peace, on some of your actions than they deserved.

She added, that her cousin Morden was warmly engaged in her favour with her friends: and one good piece of news Miss Howe's letter contained, that her father would

give up some matters, which (appertaining to her of right) would make my executorship the easier in some particulars that had given her a little pain.

She owned she had been obliged to leave off (in the letter she was writing) through weakness.

Will. says he shall reach you to-night. I shall send in the morning; and, if I find her not worse, will ride to Edgware, and return in the afternoon.

LETTER XCIV.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

MY DEAREST FRIEND, Tuesday, Aug. 29.

We are at length returned to our own home. I had intended to wait on you in London: but my mother is very ill—Alas! my dear, she is very ill indeed—and you are likewise very ill—I see *that* by your's of the 25th—What shall I do, if I lose two such near, and dear, and tender friends? She was taken ill yesterday at our last stage in our return home—and has a violent surfeit and fever, and the doctors are doubtful about her.

If she should die, how will all my pertnesses to her fly in my face!—Why, why, did I ever vex her? She says I have been all duty and obedience!—She kindly forgets all my faults, and remembers every thing I have been so happy as to oblige her in. And this cuts me to the heart.

I see, I see, my dear, you are very bad—and I cannot bear it. Do, my beloved Miss Harlowe, if you *can* be better, do, for *my* sake, *be* better; and send me word of it. Let the bearer bring me a line. Be sure you send me

a line. If I lose you, my more than sister, and lose my mother, I shall distrust my own conduct, and will not marry. And why should I?—Creeping, cringing in courtship!—O my dear, these men are a vile race of *reptiles* in *our day*, and mere *bears* in *their own*. See in Lovelace all that is desirable in figure, in birth, and in fortune: but in his heart a devil!—See in Hickman—Indeed, my dear, I cannot tell what any body can see in Hickman, to to be always preaching in his favour. And is it to be expected that I, who could hardly bear control from a mother, should take it from a husband?—from one too, who has neither more wit, nor more understanding, than myself? yet he to be my instructor!—So he will, I suppose; but more by the insolence of his will than by the merit of his counsel. It is in vain to think of it. I cannot be a wife to any man breathing whom I at present know. This I the rather mention now, because, on my mother's danger, I know you will be for pressing me the sooner to throw myself into another sort of protection, should I be deprived of her. But no more of this subject, or indeed of any other; for I am obliged to attend my mamma, who cannot bear me out of her sight.

Wednesday, Aug. 30.

My mother, Heaven be praised! has had a fine night, and is much better. Her fever has yielded to medicine! and now I can write once more with freedom and ease to you, in hopes that *you* also are better. If this be granted to my prayers, I shall again be happy, I write with still the more alacrity as I have an opportunity given me to touch upon a subject in which you are nearly concerned.

You must know then, my dear, that your cousin Morden has been here with me. He told me of an interview he

had on Monday at Lord M.'s with Lovelace; and asked me abundance of questions about you, and about that villanous man.

I could have raised a fine flame between them if I would: but, observing that he is a man of very lively passions, and believing you would be miserable if any thing should happen to him from a quarrel with a man who is known to have so many advantages at his sword, I made not the worst of the subjects we talked of. But, as I could not tell untruths in his favour, you must think I said enough to make him curse the wretch.

I don't find, well as they all used to respect Colonel Morden, that he has influence enough upon them to bring them to any terms of reconciliation.

What can they mean by it!—But your brother is come home, it seems: so, the honour of the house, the reputation of the family, is all the cry!

The Colonel is exceedingly out of humour with them all. Yet has he not hitherto, it seems, seen your brutal brother.—I told him how ill you were, and communicated to him some of the contents of your letter. He admired *you*, cursed *Lovelace*, and raved against all your *family*. —He declared that they were all unworthy of you.

At his earnest request, I permitted him to take some brief notes of such of the contents of your letter to me as I thought I *could* read to him; and, particularly, of your melancholy conclusion*.

He says that none of your friends think you so ill as you are; nor will believe it. He is sure they all love you; and that dearly too.

If they do, their present hardness of heart will be the

* See Letter LXXIV. of this volume.

subject of everlasting remorse to them should you be taken from us—but now it seems [barbarous wretches!] you are to *suffer within an inch of your life*.

He asked me questions about Mr. Belford: and, when he had heard what I had to say of that gentleman, and his disinterested services to you, he raved at some villanous surmises thrown out against you by that officious pedant, Brand: who, but for his gown, I find, would come off poorly enough between your cousin and Lovelace.

He was so uneasy about you himself, that on Thursday, the 24th, he sent up an honest serious man*, one Alston, a gentleman farmer, to inquire of your condition, your visiters, and the like; who brought him word that you was very ill, and was put to great straits to support yourself: but as this was told him by the gentlewoman of the house where you lodge, who, it seems, mingled it with some tart, though deserved, reflections upon your relations' cruelty, it was not credited by them: and I myself hope it cannot be true; for surely you could not be so *unjust*, I will say, to my friendship, as to suffer any inconveniencies for want of money. I think I could not forgive you, if it were so.

The Colonel (as one of your trustees) is resolved to see you put into possession of your estate: and, in the mean time, he has actually engaged them to remit to him for you the produce of it accrued since your grandfather's death, (a very considerable sum;) and proposes himself to attend you with it. But, by a hint he dropt, I find you had disappointed some people's littleness, by not writing to them for money and supplies; since they were determined to distress you, and to put you at defiance.

* See Letter LXV. of this volume.

Like all the rest!—I hope I may say *that* without offence.

Your cousin imagines that, before a reconciliation takes place, they will insist that you shall make such a will, as to that estate, as they shall approve of: but he declares he will not go out of England till he has seen justice done you by *every body;* and that you shall not be imposed on either by friend or foe—

By *relation* or foe, should he not have said?—for a friend will not impose upon a friend.

So, my dear, you are to *buy your peace*, if some people are to have their wills!

Your cousin [not *I*, my dear, though it was always my opinion*] says, that the whole family is *too rich* to be either *humble*, *considerate*, or *contented*. And as for himself, he has an ample fortune, he says, and thinks of leaving it wholly to you.

Had this villain Lovelace consulted his worldly interest *only*, what a fortune would he have had in you, even although your marrying him had deprived you of a paternal share!

I am obliged to leave off here. But having a good deal still to write, and my mother better, I will pursue the subject in another letter, although I send both together. I need not say how much I am, and will ever be,

Your affectionate, &c.

ANNA HOWE.

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* See Vol. I. Letter X.

LETTER XCV.

MISS HOWE, TO MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE.

Thursday, August 31.

The Colonel thought fit once, in praise of Lovelace's *generosity*, to say, that (*as a man of honour ought*) he took to himself all the blame, and acquitted you of the consequences of the precipitate step you had taken; since he said, as you loved him, and was in his power, he *must* have had advantages which he would *not* have had, if you had continued at your father's, or at any friend's.

Mighty generous, I said, (were it as he *supposed*,) in such insolent reflectors, the best of them; who pretend to *clear* reputations which never had been *sullied* but by falling into their dirty acqnaiutance! but in this case, I averred, that there was no need of any thing but the strictest truth, to demonstrate Lovelace to be the blackest of villains, you the brightest of innocents.

This he catched at; and swore, that if any thing uncommon or barbarous in the seduction were to come out, as indeed one of the letters you had written to your friends, and which had been shown him, very strongly implied; that is to say, my dear, if any thing *worse* than perjury, breach of faith, and abuse of a generous confidence, were to appear! [sorry fellows!] he would avenge his cousin to the utmost.

I urged your apprehensions on this head from your last letter to me: but he seemed capable of taking what I know to be real greatness of soul, in an unworthy sense: for he mentioned directly upon it the expectations your friends had, that you should (previous to any reconciliation with them) appear in a court of justice against the villain—IF

you could do it with the advantage to yourself that I hinted might be done.

And truly, if I would have heard him, he had indelicacy enough to have gone into the nature of the proof of the crime upon which they wanted to have Lovelace arraigned. Yet this is a man improved by travel and learning!—Upon my word, my dear, I, who have been accustomed to the most delicate conversation ever since I had the honour to know you, despise this sex from the gentleman down to the peasant.

Upon the whole, I find that Mr. Morden has a very slender notion of women's virtue in particular cases: for which reason I put him down, though your favourite, as one who is not entitled *to cast the first stone.*

I never knew a man who deserved to be well thought of himself for his morals, who had a slight opinion of the virtue of our sex in general. For if, from the *difference* of *temperament* and *education*, modesty, chastity, and piety too, are not to be found in our sex preferably to the other, I should think it a sign of much worse nature in *ours.*

He even hinted (as from your relations indeed) that it is impossible but there must be some *will* where there is much *love.*

These sort of reflections are enough to make a woman, who has at heart her own honour and the honour of her sex, to look about her, and consider what she is doing when she enters into an intimacy with these wretches; since it is plain, that whenever she throws herself into the power of a man, and leaves for him her parents or guardians, every body will believe it to be owing more to her good luck than to her discretion if there be not an end of her virtue: and let the man be ever such a villain to her, she must take into her own bosom a share of his guilty baseness.

I am writing to *general cases*. You, my dear, are out of the question. Your story, as I have heretofore said, will afford a warning, as well as an example*: For who is it that will not infer, that if a person of your fortune, character, and merit, could not escape ruin, after she had put herself into the power of her *hyæna*, what can a thoughtless, fond, giddy creature expect?

Every man, they will say, is not a LOVELACE—True: but then, neither is every woman a CLARISSA. And allow for the one and for the other the example must be of general use.

I prepared Mr. Morden to expect your appointment of Mr. Belford for an office that we both hope he will have no occasion to act in (nor any body else) for many, very many years to come. He was at first startled at it: but, upon hearing such of your reasons as had satisfied me, he only said that such an appointment, were it to take place, would exceedingly affect his other cousins.

He told me, he had a copy of Lovelace's letter to you, imploring your pardon, and offering to undergo any penance to procure it†; and also of your answer to it‡.

I find he is willing to hope that a marriage between you may still take place; which, he says, will heal up all breaches.

I would have written much more—on the following particulars especially; to wit, of the wretched man's hunting you out of your lodgings: of your relations strange *implacableness*, [I am in haste, and cannot think of a word you you would like better *just now:*] of your last letter to Lovelace, to divert him from pursuing you: of your aunt

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* See Vol. IV. Letter XI.

† See Letter XXXVI. of this volume.

‡ See Letter XL. ibid.

Hervey's penitential conversation with Mrs. Norton: of Mr. Wyerley's renewed address: of your lessons to me in Hickman's behalf, so approvable, were the man *more so* than he is; but indeed I am offended with him at this instant, and have been for these two days: of your sister's transportation-project: and of twenty and twenty other things: but am obliged to leave off, to attend my two cousins Spilsworth, and my cousin Herbert, who are come to visit us on account of my mother's illness—I will therefore dispatch these by Rogers; and if my mother gets well soon (as I hope she will) I am resolved to see you in town, and tell you every thing that now is upon my mind; and particularly, mingling my soul with your's, how much I am, and will ever be, my dearest, dear friend,

Your affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

Let Rogers bring one line, I pray you. I thought to have sent him this afternoon; but he cannot set out till to-morrow morning early.

I cannot express how much your staggering lines and your conclusion affect me!

LETTER XCVI.

MR. BELFORD, TO ROBERT LOVELACE, ESQ.

Sunday Evening, Sept. 3.

I WONDER not at the impatience your servant tells me you express to hear from me. I was designing to write you a long letter, and was just returned from Smith's for that purpose; but, since you are urgent, you must be contented with a short one.

I attended the lady this morning, just before I set out for Edgware. She was so ill over-night, that she was obliged to leave unfinished her letter to Miss Howe. But early this morning she made an end of it, and had just sealed it up as I came. She was so fatigued with writing, that she told me she would lie down after I was gone, and endeavour to recruit her spirits.

They had sent for Mr. Goddard, when she was so ill last night; and not being able to see him out of her own chamber, he, for the first time, saw her *house*, as she calls it. He was extremely shocked and concerned at it; and chid Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Lovick for not persuading her to have such an object removed from her bed-chamber: and when they excused themselves on the *little authority* it was reasonable to suppose they must have with a lady so much their superior, he reflected warmly on those who had *more* authority, and who left her to proceed with such a shocking and solemn whimsy, as he called it.

It is placed near the window, like a harpsichord, though covered over to the ground: and when she is so ill that she cannot well go to her closet, she writes and reads upon it, as others would upon a desk or table. But (only as she was so ill last night) she chooses not to see any body in that apartment.

I went to Edgware; and, returning in the evening, attended her again. She had a letter brought her from Mrs. Norton (a long one, as it seems by its bulk,) just before I came. But she had not opened it; and said, that as she was pretty calm and composed, she was afraid to look into the contents, lest she should be ruffled; expecting now to hear of nothing that could do her good or give her pleasure from that good woman's *dear hard-hearted neighbours*, as she called her own relations.

Seeing her so weak and ill, I withdrew; nor did she

desire me to tarry, as sometimes she does, when I make a motion to depart.

I had some hints, as I went away, from Mrs. Smith, that she had appropriated that evening to some offices, that were to save trouble, as she called it, after her departure; and had been giving orders to her nurse, and to Mrs. Lovick, and Mrs. Smith, about what she would have done when she *was gone;* and I believe they were of a very delicate and affecting nature; but Mrs. Smith descended not to particulars.

The doctor had been with her, as well as Mr. Goddard; and they both joined with great earnestness to persuade her to have her *house* removed out of her sight; but she assured them that it gave her pleasure and spirits; and, being a necessary preparation, she wondered they should be surprised at it, when she had not any of her family about her, or any old acquaintance, on whose care and exactness in these *punctilios*, as she called them, she could rely.

The doctor told Mrs. Smith, that he believed she would hold out long enough for any of her friends to have notice of her state, and to see her; and hardly longer; and since he could not find that she had any certainty of seeing her cousin Morden, (which made it plain that her relations continued inflexible,) he would go home, and write a letter to her father, take it as she would.

She had spent great part of the day in intense devotions; and to-morrow morning she is to have with her the same clergyman who has often attended her; from whose hands she will again receive the sacrament.

Thou seest, Lovelace, that all is preparing, that all will be ready; and I am to attend her to-morrow afternoon, to take some instructions from her in relation to my part in the office to be performed for her. And thus,

omitting the particulars of a fine conversation between her and Mrs. Lovick, which the latter acquainted me with, as well as another between her and the doctor and apothecary, which I had a design this evening to give you, they being of a very affecting nature, I have yielded to your impatience.

I shall dispatch Harry to-morrow morning early with her letter to Miss Howe: an offer she took very kindly; as she is extremely solicitous to lessen that young lady's apprehensions for her on not hearing from her by Saturday's post: and yet, if she write truth, as no doubt but she will, how can her apprehensions be lessened?

LETTER XCVII.

MISS CLARISSA HARLOWE, TO MISS HOWE.

Saturday, Sept. 2.

I WRITE, my beloved Miss Howe, though very ill still: but I could not by the return of your messenger; for I was then unable to hold a pen.

Your mother's illness (as mentioned in the first part of your letter,) gave me great distress for you, till I read farther. You bewailed it as became a daughter so sensible. May you be blessed in each other for many, very many, happy years to come! I doubt not, that even this sudden and grievous indisposition, by the frame it has put you in, and the apprehension it has given you of losing so dear a mother, will contribute to the happiness I wish you: for, alas! my dear, we seldom know how to value the blessings we enjoy, till we are in danger of losing

them, or have actually lost them: and then, what would we give to have them restored to us!

What, I wonder, has again happened between you and Mr. Hickman? Although I know not, I dare say it is owing to some pretty petulance, to some half-ungenerous advantage taken of his obligingness and assiduity. Will you never, my dear, give the weight you and all our sex ought to give to the qualities of sobriety and regularity of life and manners in that sex? Must bold creatures, and forward spirits, for ever, and by the best and wisest of us, as well as by the indiscreetest, be the most kindly treated?

My dear friends know not that I *have* actually suffered within *less* than *an inch of my life.*

Poor Mr. Brand! he meant well, I believe. I am afraid all will turn heavily upon him, when he probably imagined that he was taking the best method to oblige. But were he *not* to have been so light of belief, and so weakly officious; and had given a more favourable, and, it would be strange if I could not say, a *juster* report; things would have been, nevertheless, exactly as they are.

I must lay down my pen. I am very ill. I believe I shall be better by-and-by. The bad writing would betray me, although I had a mind to keep from you what the event must soon—

Now I resume my trembling pen. Excuse the unsteady writing. It *will* be so—

I have wanted no money: so don't be angry about such a trifle as money. Yet am I glad of what you inclined me to hope, that my friends will give up the produce of my grandfather's estate since it has been in their hands: because, knowing it to be my right, and that *they* could not want it, I had already disposed of a good part of it;

and could only hope they would be willing to give it up at my last request. And now how rich shall I think myself in this my last stage!—And yet I did not want before—indeed I did not—for who, that has many *superfluities*, can be said to want!

Do not, my dear friend, be concerned that I call it my *last stage;* For what is even the long life which in high health we wish for? What, but, as we go along, a life of apprehension, sometimes for our friends, oftener for ourselves? And at last, when arrived at the old age we covet, one heavy loss or deprivation having succeeded another, we see ourselves stript, as I may say, of every one we loved; and find ourselves exposed, as uncompanionable poor creatures, to the slights, to the contempts, of jostling youth, who want to push us off the stage, in hopes to possess what we have:—and, superadded to all, our own infirmities every day increasing: of themselves enough to make the life we wished for the greatest disease of all! Don't you remember the lines of Howard, which once you read to me in my ivy-bower*?

In the disposition of what belongs to me, I have endea-

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* These are the lines the lady refers to:

From death we rose to life: 'tis but the same,
Through life to pass again from whence we came.
With shame we see our PASSIONS can prevail,
Where *reason*, *certainty*, and *virtue* fail.
HONOUR, that empty name, can death despise;
SCORN'D LOVE to death, as to a *refuge*, flies;
And SORROW waits for death with longing eyes.
HOPE triumphs o'er the thoughts of death; and FATE
Cheats fools, and flatters the unfortunate.
We fear to lose, what a *small time* must waste,
Till life itself grows the *disease* at last.
Begging for life, we beg for *more decay*,
And to be *long a dying* only pray.

voured to do every thing in the justest and best manner I could think of; putting myself in my relations' places, and, in the greater points, ordering my matters as if no misunderstanding had happened.

I hope they will not think much of some bequests where wanted, and where due from my gratitude: but if they should, what is done, is done; and I cannot now help it. Yet I must repeat, that I hope, I *hope*, I have pleased every one of them. For I would not, on any account, have it thought that, in my last disposition, any thing undaughterly, unsisterly, or unlike a kinswoman, should have had place in a mind that is *so* truly free (as I will presume to say, from all resentment, that it now overflows with gratitude and blessings for the good I *have* received, although it be not all that my heart wished to receive. Were it even an *hardship* that I was not favoured with more, what is it but an hardship of half a year, against the *most* indulgent goodness of eighteen years and an half, that ever was shown to a daughter?

My cousin, you tell me, thinks I was off my guard, and that I was taken at some advantage. Indeed, my dear, I was not. Indeed I gave no room for advantage to be taken of me. I hope, one day, that will be seen, if I have the justice done me which Mr. Belford assures me of.

I should hope that my cousin has not taken the liberties which you (by an observation not, in general, unjust) seem to charge him with. For it is sad to think, that the generality of that sex should make so light of crimes, which they justly hold so unpardonable in their own most intimate relations of our's—yet cannot commit them without doing such injuries to other families as they think themselves obliged to resent unto death, when offered to their own.

But we women are too often to blame on this head;

since the most virtuous among us seldom make *virtue* the test of their approbation of the other sex; insomuch that a man may glory in his wickedness of this sort without being rejected on that account, even to the faces of women of unquestionable virtue. Hence it is, that a libertine seldom thinks himself concerned so much as to save appearances: And what is it not that our sex suffers in their opinion on this very score? And what have I, more than many others, to answer for on this account in the world's eye?

May my story be a warning to all, how they prefer a libertine to a man of true honour; and how they permit themselves to be misled (where they mean the *best*) by the specious, yet foolish hope of subduing riveted habits, and, as I may say, of altering natures!—The *more* foolish, as constant experience might convince us, that there is hardly one in ten, of even tolerably happy marriages, in which the wife keeps the hold in the *husband*'s affections, which she had in the *lover's*. What influence then can she hope to have over the morals of an avowed libertine, who marries perhaps for conveniency, who despises the tie, and whom, it is too probable, nothing but old age, or sickness, or disease, (the consequence of ruinous riot,) can reclaim?

I am very glad you gave my cous—

Sunday Morning, Sept. 3, Six o'clock.

HITHER I had written, and was forced to quit my pen. And so much weaker and worse I grew, that had I resumed it, to have closed here, it must have been with such trembling unsteadiness, that it would have given you more concern for me, than the delay of sending it away by last night's post can do. I deferred it, therefore, to see how it would please God to deal with me. And I find myself,

after a better night than I expected, lively and clear; and hope to give a proof that I do, in the continuation of my letter, which I will pursue as currently as if I had not left off.

I am glad you so considerately gave my cousin Morden favourable impressions of Mr. Belford; since, otherwise, some misunderstanding might have happened between *them:* for although I hope this Mr. Belford is an altered man, and in time will be a reformed one, yet is he one of those high spirits that has been accustomed to resent *imaginary indignities* to *himself*, when, I believe, he has not been studious to avoid giving *real offences* to *others;* men of this cast acting as if they thought all the world was made to bear with them, and they with nobody in it.

Mr. Lovelace, you tell me, thought fit to intrust my cousin with the copy of his letter of penitence to me, and with my answer to it, rejecting him and his suit: and Mr. Belford, moreover, acquaints me, how much concerned Mr. Lovelace is for his baseness, and how freely he accused himself to my cousin. This shows, that the *true* bravery of spirit is to be above doing a vile action; and that nothing subjects the human mind to so much meanness, as the consciousness of having done wilful wrong to our fellow creatures. How low, how sordid, are the submissions which elaborate baseness compels! that that wretch could treat me as he did, and then could so poorly creep to me for forgiveness of crimes so wilful, so black, and so premeditated! how my soul despised him for his meanness on a certain occasion, of which you will one day be informed*! and him whose actions one's heart despises, it

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* Meaning his meditated second violence (See Vol. VI. Letter XIII.) and his succeeding letters to her, supplicating for her pardon.

it is far from being difficult to reject, had one ever so partially favoured him once.

Yet am I glad this violent spirit *can* thus creep; that, like a poisonous serpent, he *can* thus coil himself, and hide his head in his own narrow circlets; because this stooping, this abasement, gives me hope that no farther mischief will ensue.

All my apprehension is, what may happen when I am gone; lest then my cousin, or any other of my family, should endeavour to avenge me, and risk their own more precious lives on that account.

If that part of Cain's curse were Mr. Lovelace's, *to be a fugitive and vagabond in the earth;* that is to say, if it meant no more harm to him than that he should be obliged to travel, as it seems he intends, (though I wish him no ill in his travels;) and I could know it; then should I be easy in the hoped-for safety of my friends from his skilful violence—Oh! that I could hear he was a thousand miles off!

When I began this letter, I did not think I could have run to such a length. But 'tis to YOU, my dearest friend, and *you* have a title to the spirits you raise and support; for they are no longer mine, and will subside the moment I cease writing to you.

But what do you bid me hope for, when you tell me that, if your mother's health will permit, you will see me in town? I *hope* your mother's health will be perfected as you wish; but I dare not promise myself so great a favour; so great a *blessing*, I will call it—and indeed I know not if I should be able to bear it now!

Yet one comfort it is in your power to give me; and that is, let me know, and very speedily it must be, if you wish to oblige me, that all matters are made up between you and Mr. Hickman; to whom, I see, you are resolved

with all your bravery of spirit, to owe a multitude of obligations for his patience with your flightiness. Think of this, my dear proud friend! and think, likewise, of what I have often told you, that PRIDE, in man or woman, is an extreme that hardly ever fails, sooner or later, to bring forth its mortifying CONTRARY.

May you, my dear Miss Howe, have no discomforts but what you make to yourself! as it will be in your own power to lessen such as these, they ought to be your punishment if you do not. There is no such thing as *perfect happiness* here, since the busy mind will *make* to itself evils, were it to *find* none. You will, therefore, pardon this limited wish, strange as it may appear, till you consider it: for to wish you no infelicity, either within or without you, were to wish you what can never happen in this world; and what perhaps ought not to be wished for, if *by a wish* one could give one's friend such an exemption; since we are not to live here always.

We must not, in short, expect that our roses will grow without thorns: but then they are useful and instructive thorns: which, by pricking the fingers of the too-hasty plucker, teach future caution. And who knows not that difficulty gives poignancy to our enjoyments; which are apt to lose their relish with us when they are over easily obtained?

I *must* conclude—

God for ever bless you, and all you love and honour, and reward you here and hereafter for your kindness to

Your ever obliged and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

END OF VOL. VII.

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